

THE
Mystery of FAITH

John Opened up:

ON Some SERMONS

Concerning FAITH, & two

which were not formerly Printed.

Wherein the Nature, Excellency,

and Usefulness of that noble Grace is much

Clear'd, and the practice thereof

most powerfully Pressed.

Wherunto are added other three Sermons,

two concerning the Great Salvation, one

of these not formerly Printed, and

third concerning Death.

By *James Gray*, M. A. Minister of the
Gospel in Glasgow.

All these Sermons being now carefully Revi-
sed, and much Corrected.

Joh. 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned
already, because he hath not believed in the
Name of the only begotten Son of God.

Edinburgh, Printed by the Heirs and Successors
of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the King's
Excellent Majesty. Anno DOM. 1697.

John John Bullard

Christian Reader

Christ

Amongst many weighty and soul-piercing sentences that you will find in these following Sermons, this is one, That the Professors of this age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell, they will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place: the one to the free Grace of God, and the other to his Justice. And certainly if we speak of these in this time, whose blessed lot it shall be to inherit the kingdom, they cannot but acknowledge themselves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before him, for washing them from such ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with, for bringing them through so great tribulations, preserving them in the midst of so great tentations, and dangerous snares, as have encompassed them; yes, and still keeping in the light before them, notwithstanding of so many blasts (if we may so speak) from all the four winds of Hell to blow it out. and on the other hand, if we shall speak of these who in this generation shall perish, assuredly their debt unto Divine Justice must be exceeding great, above all who are gone down to the pit before them, because the roll of their mercies are found to have been many cubits longer, and many cubits broader, than theirs who lived in the preceeding ages: and the great things that the Lord hath wrought in our days, have born a greater testimony, against the wickedness, hardness and atheism, of this time, than many former. But above all, the great measure of Gospel-light that he hath no less plentifully offered, than wonderfully preserved

To the Reader.

to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors; hath undoubtedly made the sin of these who shall utterly reject their own mercy, so out of mercy sinful, and their unbelief so exceedingly inexcusable, that their guilt must needs justify *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, or *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, in that day when every man shall give account of himself to God. And amongst the many preaching witnesses, that (alas we are afraid) shall appear in that day against many yet living in their pleasures, and dead while they live; This now glorified Author cannot but be one, whose testimony must be very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, negligent and time-wasting youth in this age. For when he was first drawn to the Ministry, he was but a youth indeed, scarce twenty years compleat, far within that age, that by the constitution of this Church, (except in case of more than common abilities, which indeed he had) is required for entering into that great and holy Calling; and for the space of two years after, (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his labour, he was helped to press the truths and threatnings of God so home upon the Consciences of his hearers, that as it was observed of him, by one of his most Learned and pious Colleagues *Mr. Durham*, who is now in glory with him) he did many times cause the hair of their head to stand up: The Lord was not only hereby verifying his Word, that he can take the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and out of the mouth of Babes can perfect his own praise, but designing also (as would seem of purpose) to send a Boy out of the School for a reprovor of the sluggishness of his people, that thereby the aged might be the more ashamed, and the younger more afraid: Neither do we think that this was all, but truly when we consider what measure of Graces, Gifts and Experiences the Lord did bestow upon so young a person, and then with what humility, self-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority and moderation, he was helped to manage these Talents during that short time of his Ministry: It may be justly con-

To the Reader.

ceived that the Lord brought him forth to be
conviction even to many of us in the Ministry, who
into our Masters Vineyard long before him, and with
out behind him: And indeed to us it looketh somewhat
like the Lords taking up of the *little Child* and setting
him amongst the midst of his contending Disciples in
these times, that even they who would be greatest a-
mongst us, might be least, and see somewhat of their
own weakness.

As to this little Piece, whatever ye shall find in it, it
hath this to say for it self, that whereas many writings
in the world, do intrude themselves upon the Press; yet
this the Press hath violently thrust into the world: For
some young Student from his good affection to the edi-
fication of the Lords People, and (no doubt) from his
high esteem of the precious Author his memory, having
given in to the Press, a Copy of some of these Sermons,
being only Notes taken from his mouth when he preach-
ed them, no sooner were they seen abroad, but all the
Presses in the Nation fell a labouring about them; so
that (if we mistake not) in less than two or three
months time, three or four Impressions were cast off,
yet all of them so imperfect and maimed, that howbe-
it the excellency of the Matter, and the fresh remem-
brance of the worthy Author his Name, made them
very sweet to many, (especially these who had heard
him preach) yet the unsuitable dress wherein they
appeared, and the mistakes of the first Writers (they
being hardly able to take up every thing as it was
spoken) occasioning diverse material failings in the
sense, besides lesser faults, could not but be a trouble
to those who are acquainted not only with the singu-
lar graces, but parts also of the eminent Youth. This
gave occasion to some friends to speak a little what
way these prejudices, which both the Truth and the Au-
thors Name might ly under, by these incorrect Impres-
sions might be taken off. And finding that the Copy,
which by providence, the worthy young Gentlewoman

To the Reader.

to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors; hath undoubtedly made the sin of these who shall utterly reject their own mercy, so out of mercy sinful, and their unbelief so exceedingly Inexcusable, that their guilt must needs justify *Chorazin and Bethsaida, or Sodom and Gomorrah*, in that day when every man shall give account of himself to God. And amongst the many preaching witnesses, that (alas we are afraid) shall compare in that day against many yet living in their pleasures, and dead while they live; This now glorified Author cannot but be one, whose testimony must be very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, negligent and time-wasting youth in this age. For when he was first drawn to the Ministry, he was but a youth indeed, scarce twenty years compleat, far within that age, that by the constitution of this Church, (except in case of more than common abilities, which indeed he had) is required for entering into that great and holy Calling; and for the space of two years after, (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his labour, he was helped to press the truths and threatnings of God so home upon the Consciences of his hearers, that as it was observed of him, by one of his most Learned and pious Colleagues Mr. *Durham*, who is now in glory with him) he did many times cause the hair of their head to stand up: The Lord was not only hereby verifying his Word, that he can take the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and out of the mouth of Babes can perfect his own praise, but designing also (as would seem of purpose) to send a Boy out of the School for a reprovor of the sluggishness of his people, that thereby the aged might be the more ashamed, and the younger more afraid: Neither do we think that this was all, but truly when we consider what measure of Graces, Gifts and Experiences the Lord did bestow upon so young a person, and then with what humility, self-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority and moderation, he was helped to manage these Talents during that short time of his Ministry: It may be justly con-

To the Reader.

ceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great
conviction even to many of us in the Ministry, who came
into our Masters Vineyard long before him, and will go
out behind him: And indeed to us it looketh somewhat
like the Lords taking up of the *little Child* and setting
him amongst the midst of his contending Disciples in
these times, that even they who would be greatest a-
mongst us, might be least, and see somewhat of their
own weakness.

As to this little Piece, whatever ye shall find in it, it
hath this to say for it self, that whereas many writings
in the world, do intrude themselves upon the Press; yet
this the Press hath violently thrust into the world: For
some young Student from his good affection to the edi-
fication of the Lords People, and (no doubt) from his
high esteem of the precious Author his memory, having
given in to the Press, a Copy of some of these Sermons,
being only Notes taken from his mouth when he preach-
ed them, no sooner were they seen abroad, but all the
Presses in the Nation fell a labouring about them; so
that (if we mistake not) in less than two or three
months time, three or four Impressions were cast off,
yet all of them so imperfect and maimed, that howbe-
it the excellency of the Matter, and the fresh remem-
brance of the worthy Author his Name, made them
very sweet to many, (especially these who had heard
him preach) yet the unsuitable dress wherein they
appeared, and the mistakes of the first Writers (they
being hardly able to take up every thing as it was
spoken) occasioning diverse material failings in the
sense, besides lesser faults, could not but be a trouble
to those who are acquainted not only with the singu-
lar graces, but parts also of the eminent Youth. This
gave occasion to some friends to speak a little what
way these prejudices, which both the Truth and the Au-
thors Name might ly under, by these incorrect Impres-
sions might be taken off. And finding that the Copy,
which by providence, the worthy young Gentlewoman

And was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but
 Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the most correct
 that could be found: And that also did contain the
 whole purposes that he had preached upon these Texts,
 yea, the whole purposes concerning Faith that he had
 preached, according to that method purposed in the
 first of the Sermons formerly published. This was un-
 dertaken to be revised by some, who, albeit none of the
 fittest for these employments, yet rather or nothing
 should be done in the business, were content to bestow
 some hours upon it, according as other necessary em-
 ployments would permit. And now having sought out
 all the Notes of these Sermons which we could find
 from other hands, and compared them with the Copy
 above mentioned, we do again present them to the
 people, not with any confidence that our pains hath
 put any effect upon them; only we have some hopes the
 whole subject being now before them, and these things
 in the way of expression helped, which either might
 seem to be somewhat unpleasant, or lyable to mistakes,
 they shall not now be less edifying, nor less acceptable,
 than formerly they were. We did not think fit to make
 any considerable alterations as to the method, or other
 things of that kind, lest happily by straining his excel-
 lent purposes too much, to shape them to the ordinary
 rules, or to reduce them to that order which might
 have pleased our selves, we should have wronged the
 matter it self, at least have put them to a loss who did
 hear him preach; and it may be now upon their read-
 ing things in that same order as they heard them, will
 be the more readily brought under the impressions of
 that liveliness, power and weight, which (it may be)
 formerly they felt upon their hearts when he was
 speaking.

If the Method do not altogether satisfy some spirits,
 or the explication seem not so full; or if they find some
 introductions which possibly lead not in so close, or
 seem not so suitable to the subject of the Sermons; or
 happily

To the Reader

happily now and then there be some little digressions from the main purpose, we shall desire that this may not at all be constructed to be the Authors ignorance of rules and method, or his want of abilities in humane learning, it being well known to those who were best acquainted with him, that he indeed had a scholastick spirit, and was in reading, far beyond his age and opportunities for studying; but as to all these we shall intreat you rather to consider, 1. His age, and that his gifts was but in the very moulding and breaking (as we speak) in the point of order and method, when the Lord was pleased to call him home from his work. 2. That every man hath his proper Gift of God, who in his great wisdom, and certainly for the good of his Church, doth so order, that there is somewhat singular and peculiar almost in every mans way, as to these things. 3. For any thing we know, he had never that high esteem of this, or any other of his labours. as to design any of them for publick view; and ^{to be} but Notes taken from his mouth. 4. We ^{valued} recent things ^{absolute and sub-} he studied more his hearers than himself. Ye will easily perceive, when ye have but read a little, that it hath been a man of a very zealous temper, that the great benefit of his spirit, and that which he did wholly spend himself about, was to make people know their dangerous condition by nature, and by all means to perswade them to believe, and lay hold upon the great Salvation: And truly, that a man in such a frame should less attend to these lesser things, is not to be wondered at. And indeed, though these things be good in themselves, and worthy to be looked to in their own place, yet for a Minister of the Gospel in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin up every purpose to such a method, and insist into such a measure of explications and Criticisms upon words, is but to felter himself, and to starve his people, 5. Consider the dullness of the most part of the hearers in this age, and how hard a thing it is to wake a sleeping world, and to

to the Reader.

get them but to think that it doth concern them to hear
in earnest; and possibly it was not a small piece of
spiritual wisdom in him, (and it may be not unfit to
imitat by others) to begin or end all his Sermons
with an awakning word concerning Heaven, or Hell, or
Judgement, and the danger of choosing the evil, and
refusing the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is,
that his soul was so filled with such longings after Hea-
ven and Glory, and so inflamed with the love of Christ,
especially towards the latter end of his race, that when
he fell on these subjects, upon which (ye will see) most
of these digressions are, he could not well contain
himself, nor easily bring off his own spirit, a thing
not unusual to the Saints in Scripture: and howbeit
such things might seem somewhat singular (in the
time) and not so coherent; yet now we have ground
to apprehend, that they were often strong influences of
the Lords Spirit, stirring up a lamp as it were into a
sudden blaze, that was not to burn long in his Church.
they shall not detain you no longer, only this we
say, that though these Sermons are nei-
ther so exact, nor so full, as doubtless they would
have been, if they had come from the Authors own
Pen; yet as we dare say, they were studied with Pray-
er, preached with Power, and backed with Success;
so also, if we shall read them with Consideration, me-
ditat with Prayer, and practise with Diligence, ye
shall neither find your time nor pains ill bestowed; but
shall have cause to bless the Lord for this, amongst o-
ther helps that he hath given, for making you meet for
the Inheritance of the Saints in light, that it may be
blest to these ends, is the earnest desire and Prayer of
your Servants in the work of the Lord.

Ro: Trail.

Jo: Sterling.

The



The Mystery of FAITH Opened up. *up*

SERMON I.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THis everlasting Gospel (in which there are drawn so many precious draughts and divine Lineaments of the transcendent beauty of a crucified Saviour, and of the riches of his unsearchable Grace) is a most precious and excellent thing, not only because it doth contain most absolute and sublime Precepts and Commands, in the exercise and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the highest pitch in holiness, but likewise, because it containeth most rich and precious Promises, in the possession and fruition of which, we are advanced to the highest pinnacle of eternal blessedness, this is clear in the Grace of Faith ; for what doth more purifie the heart, and stamp it with the Image of the invisible God, than this Grace of Faith ? And what richer Promises are annexed to any duty, than to this duty of believing, to wit, everlasting life, and fruition of God. So that if we dwelt forty days at the foot of the Mount Sinai, and had been under the greatest discovering and condemning power of the Law, we may yet come with boldness to Mount Sin, and there embrace Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness, to such as believe ; Upon which Mount he standeth, holding forth the Golden Sceptre of

Edw. Mander

The Mystery of Faith

his peace, desiring us to embrace him, and his crying out that word in *Isai. 65. i. Behold me, behold me.* O! may we not summon Angels, and these twenty four Elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder that ever such a command as this came forth, that we should believe on the Name of the Son of God, after that we had broken that first and primitive command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree*; Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoyce over judgment? And O! may we not wonder at the precious oath of the everlasting Covenant whereby he hath sworn, *That he delighteth not in the death of sinners*? What (suppose ye) were poor *Adams* thoughts, when at the first doctrine of Free-grace, and of a crucified Christ Jesus a Saviour, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that Heaven should have preached peace to Earth, after that Earth had proclaimed war against Heaven? Was not this a low step of condescendency, to behold an offended God preaching peace and good will to a guilty sinner? What could Self-destroying *Adam* think of these morning and first discoveries of this everlasting Covenant? Christ as it were, in the morning of time, giving vent to that infinite love; which was resting in his bosom and precious heart, before the Foundation of the World was laid. We know not whether the infiniteness of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greatest wonder; But sure, these three joyned together, make up a matchless and everlasting wonder. Would any of you ask the question, What is Christ worth? We could give no answer so suitable as this, it is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Men on Earth, to calculate His worth: all Men here must be put to a divine *nonplus*: This was *Jobs* divinity, *Job. 8. 13. Man knoweth not the price of wisdom.* And must not Jesus Christ who is the precious Object of Faith, and Wisdom of the Father, be a supereminent and excellent One, who hath that Name

Op ned up

Name of King of Kings, and Lord of lords, not engraven on his Vesture, (which pointeth out the spicuousness of his Majesty) but even also upon his Thigh, to point out, that in all his goings and motions, he proveth himself to be higher than the Kings of the Earth? And howbeit the naked proposing of the Object, doth not convert; yet if once our souls were admitted to behold such a sight as Christ in his Beauty and Majesty, and to be satisfied with the divine rays of his transcendent glory, then certainly we should find a blessed necessity laid upon us of closing with him: for Christ hath a sword proceeding out of his precious mouth, by which he doth subject and subjugate his own to himself, as well as he hath a sword girded upon his Thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confess it is not only hard, but simply impossible, to commit a *Hyperbole* in commending of him; His worth being always so far above our expressions, and our expressions always far beneath his worth, therefore we may be put to propose that desire unto him, *Exalt thy self, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to begin our discourse upon that radical and precious Grace of Faith, we intend to speak of it under this twofold notion and consideration: First, We shall speak of it as it is justifying, or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, making application of the precious promises in the Covenant of free grace, which we call justifying Faith. And in the second place, we shall speak a little unto Faith, as it doth lay hold upon Christs strength, for advancing the work of mortification, and doth discover the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, by which we advance in the work of holiness, and divine conformity with God, which we call sanctifying Faith. However, it is not to be supposed, that these are different habits of Faith, but different acts flowing from the same saving habit, laying hold and exercising themselves upon Christ in different respects, and for

The Mystery of Faith

his peace, desiring us to embrace him, and his crying out that word in *Isai. 63. i. Behold me, behold me.* O! may we not summon Angels, and these twenty four Elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder that ever such a command as this came forth, that we should believe on the Name of the Son of God, after that we had broken that first and primitive command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree*; Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoyce over judgment? And O! may we not wonder at the precious oath of the everlasting Covenant whereby he hath sworn, *That he delighteth not in the death of sinners*? What (suppose ye) were poor *Adams* thoughts, when at the first doctrine of Free-grace, and of a crucified Christ Jesus a Saviour, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that Heaven should have preached peace to Earth, after that Earth had proclaimed war against Heaven? Was not this a low step of condescendency, to behold an offended God preaching peace and good will to a guilty sinner? What could Self-destroying *Adam* think of these morning and first discoveries of this everlasting Covenant? Christ as it were, in the morning of time, giving vent to that infinite love; which was resting in his bosom and precious heart, before the Foundation of the World was laid. We know not whether the infiniteness of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greatest wonder; But sure, these three joyned together, make up a matchless and everlasting wonder. Would any of you ask the question, What is Christ worth? We could give no answer so suitable as this, it is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Men on Earth, to calculate His worth: all Men here must be put to a divine nonplus: This was *Jess* divinity, *Job. 8. 13. Man knoweth not the price of wisdom.* And must not Jesus Christ who is the precious Object of Faith, and Wisdom of the Father, be a supereminent and excellent One, who hath that Name

Op ned up

Name of King of Kings, and Lord of lords, not only engraven on his Vesture, (which pointeth out the conspicuousness of his Majesty) but even also upon his Thigh, to point out, that in all his goings and motions, he proveth himself to be higher than the Kings of the Earth? And howbeit the naked proposing of the Object, doth not convert; yet if once our souls were admitted to behold such a sight as Christ in his Beauty and Majesty, and to be satisfied with the divine rays of his transcendent glory, then certainly we should find a blessed necessity laid upon us of closing with him: for Christ hath a sword proceeding out of his precious mouth, by which he doth subject and subjugate his own to himself, as well as he hath a sword girded upon his Thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confess it is not only hard, but simply impossible, to commit a *Hyperbole* in commending of him; His worth being always so far above our expressions, and our expressions always far beneath his worth, therefore we may be put to propose that desire unto him, *Exalt thy Self, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to begin our discourse upon that radical and precious Grace of Faith, we intend to speak of it under this twofold notion and consideration: First, We shall speak of it as it is justifying, or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, making application of the precious promises in the Covenant of free grace, which we call justifying Faith. And in the second place, we shall speak a little unto Faith, as it doth lay hold upon Christs Strength, for advancing the work of mortification, and doth discover the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, by which we advance in the work of holiness, and divine conformity with God, which we call sanctifying Faith. However, it is not to be supposed, that these are different habits of Faith, but different acts flowing from the same saving habit, laying hold and exercising themselves upon Christ in different respects, and for

for diverse ends. Now to speak upon the first, we have made choice of these words. The Apostle *John* in the former verse, hath been pointing out the precious advantages of the Grace of Obedience, and of keeping his Commands, that such a one hath as it were, an arbitrary power with God, and doth receive many precious returns of Prayer: As likewise, that one who is exercised in the Grace of Repentance, is Gods delight: which is included in this, that he doth these things which are well-pleasing in his sight. And now in these words, he doth as it were, answer an Objection that might be proposed, about the impossibility of attaining these precious advantages, seeing his Commands were so large, and that hardly they could be remembered. This he doth sweetly answer, by setting down in this one verse, a short compend or breviary both of Law and Gospel, viz. *That we should love one another*, which is the Compend of the Law: And, *That we should believe on the Name of his Son*; which is the Compend of the Gospel. And by this, he sheweth the Christian that there are not many things required of him, for attaining these excellent advantages; but if he exercise himself in the obedience of these two comprehensive commandments, he shall find favour both with God and men. And as concerning this precious Grace of Faith; We have, 1. The advantages of it implied in the words, and clear also from the Scope, as (no doubt) all the Commands have infinite advantages infolded in their bosom, which redounds to a Believer by his practising of them. And 2. The excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called *His command*, as if he had no other command but this; (and the Greek Particle is here prefixed, which hath a great *Emphasis* and Force in it, *Kai autōn isōn ētellen autōn*.) But 3. There is this also, the absolute necessity of this Grace, holden forth here in this word, *His commandment*; as if he would have said, by proposing this command, I do set life and death before you, and that ye would not conceive that

it.

it is an arbitrary and indifferent thing for you to believe, or not: But be perswaded of this, that as an infinit advantage may perswade you to the obedience of it; so absolute necessity must perswade you to act that which is of your everlasting concernment. And lastly, Ye have the precious Object upon which Faith (which is justifying) doth exercise it self, and that is upon the Name of the Son of God. And (no doubt) Faith is that excellent Grace, which doth elevate the Soul into a sweet and inseparable Union with Christ: and is that golden and precious Knot, that doth eternally knit the hearts of these precious Friends together. Faith is that Grace that draweth the first draughts of Christs precious Image on our hearts, and by love accomplish and perfect them. Now Faith doth take hold, not only on the Faithfulness of God that he is a God of Truth, and that in him there is no lie: but likewise it taketh hold on the omnipotency of God, that he is one to whom nothing is too hard: and on the infinit mercy and love of God, that he is one who doth delight to magnifie this Attribute above all his Works, and these are the three great Pillars of justifying Faith. From the first, it answereth all these Objections of Sense, which do ordinarily cry forth, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* And that with this one word, *If he hath once purposed it, he will also do it, and if he hath once spoken it, he will also make it come to pass.* From the second, it answereth all these Objections that may arise from carnal reason and probability, which tend to the weakness of his confidence: And these do oftentimes cry out, *How can these things be?* But Faith laying hold upon the Omnipotency of God, *It staggereth not at the Promises, but is strong in the faith, giving glory to God:* And it is the noble and divine exercise of this herpick Grace of Faith, that these Objections of Reason and Probability, which it cannot answer, it will lay them aside, and yet close with the promise; which was the practice of believing Abraham, who considered not his own body being weak,

The Mystery of Faith

nor the barrenness of Sarahs womb. As likewise it was the commendable practice of that woman, *Matth. 15.* Who not being able to answer the second Tryal of her Faith from Reason, yet notwithstanding Faith made her cry out, *Have mercy upon me, O Son of David.* And from the last, a Christian doth answer all the Arguments of Misbelief, which do arise from the convictions of our unworthiness and sinfulness, which makes us oftentimes embrace that Divinity of *Peters, Luk. 5. 8.* Depart from me, for I am a sinful man. But Faith taking hold on the infinite mercy and love of Christ, it answereth all with this, *He walks not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that precious and golden rule of love and boundless compassion.*

But before we shall speak any thing unto you of these things, we would a little point out some few things, to be known as previous to these, we shall not dwell long in pointing out the nature of justifying Faith: It is that Grace, whereby a Christian being convinced of his lost estate, and of an utter impossibility to save himself, he doth flee to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and unto him who is that precious City of Refuge, and there doth abide till our High Priest shall die, which shall not be for ever. Or if we will, it is a sweet travelling of the immortal Soul betwixt infinite misery, and infinite mercy; betwixt an utter impossibility to save our selves, and a compleat ability in him to save to the uttermost, betwixt abounding sin, and superabounding mercy: hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture, under that notion of coming, *Isa. 35. 1.* *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.* *Rev. 12. 7.* *Whosoever will, let them take the water of life freely.* *Heb. 7. 25.* *Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him.* And we may say by the way, that if once a sinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteousness but filthy rags, and to believe that a
man

Opened up.

man is as really justified before God by imputed righteousness, as if it were by inherent holiness; surely such an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither shall we stand long to point out this unto you; that it is your duty to believe; for it is clear, not only from this place, but likewise from Isa. 45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* Mat. 11. 28 *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Joh. 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Isa. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come buy without money, and without price.* But O! its a great misery of many, (and that which may be a subject of perpetuall lamentation) that we can neither be subject to the Law, as commanding to obey it, or as threatening to believe it: nor to the Gospel, as promising to embrace it, and sweetly to receive it. O! but that primitive Temptation and Delusion, whereby Satan did deceive our first Father, is that whereby he yet seeks to catch and delude many souls, viz. That though we eat of the forbidden Fruit, and walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth suggest this to us, that we shall not die, but shall once be as God; This is Satans great and deluding Divinity: and therefore, to enforce this great and precious Command a little further, we shall propose these considerations.

First, That the Gospel hath laid no obstructions in our way of closing with Christ, and partaking of the effects of the Gospel; but on the contrary, sheweth, that the great impediment is our want of willingness which we lay in our own way, as is clear from Joh. 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye may get life;* as likewise from Revel. 22. 17. *Where the Gates of the Gospel are cast open, and whosoever will, are commanded to enter in:* So that although you may father your Misbelief upon your Inability, or that your spot is not the spot of his people; yet
know,

The Mystery of Faith

know, that the rise and original of it, is want of willingness. But to make this more clear, we would have you all knowing this, that all the qualifications annexed to this Commandment of Faith, as that in *Matth. 11. 28.* speaketh out the qualifications rather of these that will come, than all these that ought to come: Or he inviteth these, that through the spirit of discouragement and misbelief, have the greatest reluctancy to come, and may not that cardinal and soul-refreshing promise, *John 6. 37.* stop the mouth of misbelief, so that it should have nothing to say? *He that cometh unto me, I will in no ways cast out;* ye may reduce your misbelief rather to the sinfulness of your will, than to the sinfulness of your walk, and if once ye would come the length of willingness to embrace Jesus Christ, all other Objections and Knots should be sweetly loosed and dissolved.

Secondly, Consider, that though we should pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God shall abide on us: What are all the works of these Hypocrites, and these glistering acts of Law-sanctification, but a plunging our selves in the ditch, until our own cloaths abhor us? Therefore it is, that after the Prophet *Zachary* hath made mention in the twelfth Chapter of his Prophecie, of making bitter lamentation for him whom we have pierced, as for an only Son; yet in the beginning of the 13. Chapter, he maketh mention of a Fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness; which may intimat unto us, that although we have washt our selves with our own Tears, yet there is use of the Blood of Christ, and that we must be washed in that Fountain, even for our own righteousness which are but as filthy rags.

Thirdly, Consider that great and monstrous sinfulness that is in this sin of unbelief; we must strain at a Gnat, but we will easily swallow down this Camel: we will Tithe Mint and Annise, and fast twice in the Week, but neglect Faith, and Love, and Judgement, which

opened up.

which are the weightier things of the Law. And indeed there are these things which speak out the sinfulness of Unbelief: 1. That when the Holy Ghost is sent to convince the world of sin, *John 16. 9.* He pitched upon this sin, as though there were no other sin, of which the world had need to be convinced, *He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on the Son of God:* and no doubt there is more sinfulness in that sin, than in any branch of the Moral Law, it being a sin against a matchless love, and against that which is the remedy of sin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency, disobedience, as is clear from *Heb. 4. 11.* *Lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief;* or as the words may be rendered, *lest any of you fall after that example of disobedience,* *Ephes. 2. 3, 4.* That amongst all these that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, these that are guilty of this sin of unbelief, they are put in the first place, *Rev. 21. 8.* And, 4. That unbelief doth contradict and deny these three precious and cordial Attributes of God; 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulness, and make him a liar? *1 John 5. 1, 2.* Doth it not contradict the infiniteness of his power? And, 3. The infiniteness of his love, and supposeth that there is something too hard for him, which his power cannot reach, nor his infinite love overcome? We may reduce many of our Questions and Disputings of his good will to this original, viz. to the disputings of his power. No doubt if we belong to him, we shall once sing that note of lamentation over our unbelief; *That is our infirmities, for changes are from the right hand of the most High.*

And lastly, to enforce this precious command of Faith, consider that it is his command which speaketh forth this, that we must not take an indulgence or dispensation to our selves to believe, or not to believe at our pleasure: and is it not a strange thing that Christians are less convinced of the breaches of the command.

The Mystery of Faith

commandments of Faith, than of other commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar* a little sin; and it proceedeth either from this, that the conviction of other sins (as the neglect of prayer. or the sin of swearing, or committing adultery) do arise from a natural conscience; for there is somewhat of natures light to make us abominate and hate them: when yet the light of nature will not lead us to the convictions of the sinfulness of misbelief, it being a Gospel and more spiritual sin. Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily pass valid under the vizard of some refined vertue, as humility and tenderness, though that rather it may be said that it is pride and ignorance, cloathed with the garments of humility. And no doubt Christ doth account obedience to this Commandment of Faith the greatest act of humility, as is clear from *Rom. 10. 3.* where it is called submission; they submitted *not to the righteousness of God.* Or else it proceedeth from this, that we conceive that the commandment of Faith is not of so large extent as other commands, and so doth not bind us to the obedience of it; but know this, that it shall be the condemnation of the world, that they have not believed on the Name of the Son of God; and no doubt but it is Satan's great design and cardinal project, to keep us back from obedience to the commandment of Faith, and that we should not listen to the precious promises of this everlasting Gospel, but should reject the counsel of God against our selves, and refuse his precious and divine call.

The second precious consideration that we would give, shall be to show you what are the causes that there is so much disputing of our interest, and so little believing; that we are so unstable as water, marring our own excellency, spending so much of our time in walking under a cloud, and are so seldom admitted to read our names in these Precious and Eternal records of Heaven? No doubt these things have influence upon it, viz. 1. That we

opened up.

we more judging of God by his dispensations, than by his word, supposing ever the change of his dispensations to speak forth the change of our state; this is misbeliefs Divinity. That when sense cannot read love in his face, but he appeareth to frown, and to cast a cloud over it, then it is Presumption (faith sense) to read love in his heart, or in his Word; but know it was a self-denying practice of believing *Job* to cry out, *Though he should kill me, I will believe in him*; therefore make not dispensations your Bible; otherways ye will stumble at the noon tide of the day, and shall halt in your way; knew you never what such a thing as this meant, to ascend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithstanding any thing that his dispensations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our Faith were opened, we might see infinite love engraven on the darkest acts, and most dismal like dispensations of his to us, though it be oftentimes written in dark and dim characters of sense.

2. There is this likeways which hath influence upon our so much disputing and misbelieving, viz. a guilty Conscience, and the intertainment of some predominant lust, which oftentimes occasioneth our walking in darkness and having no light: This is clear from *1 Tim.* 2. 19. where that precious Jewel of Faith can be holden in no other place, but in a pure conscience, that is that Royal place wherein it must dwell; And no doubt if once we make *shipwrack of a good conscience*, we will err concerning our Faith. A bosom idol when it is intertained, doth exceedingly mar the vigorous exercise of these graces, which are evidences of our Faith, and certainly grace rather in its degrees, than in its sincerity or simple being only, is that which giveth the clear evidence of Faith. Therefore when we find not love in its hight and eminent actings, we hardly win to make it any way clearly concluding demonstration of our Faith.

3. As likewise, a bosom idol, when it is entertained, maketh us to lose much of our high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ; which doth exceedingly in-

interrupt the sweet and precious things of Faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal soul be united to Jesus Christ by the bond of love and respect, then our Faith will increase with the increase of God. Our intertainment of a bosom idol is ordinarily punished with the want of the sensible intimations of his grace, and of our interest in him: so that sometimes his own are constrained to cry out, *God hath departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dreams nor visions.*

4. There is that likewise, that hath influence upon it, our not closing absolutely with Jesus Christ, but upon conditions and suppositions. We make not an absolute and blank resignation of our selves over unto Christ, to hold fast the Covenant, notwithstanding, he should dispense both bitter and sad things to us; but we conceive that Christs Covenant with believers is like that Covenant that God made with *Noah*, that there should be Summer and Winter, seed time and harvest, night and day unto a Christian. A Christian must have his night as well as his day: he must once sow in tears, before he reap in joy: he must once go forth, bearing his precious Seed, before he can return bearing his Sheaves in his bosom: and that this hath influence upon our instability, may be seen from this, that often a Christian after his first closing with Christ, he meeteth with desertion in point of tenderness, in point of joy, and in point of strength; so that his corruption seems now to be awakened more than formerly, that he wants those seeming enjoyments of him which formerly he had: and that much of his softness of heart hath now vanished, which is clear, somewhat from *Heb. 10. 32. And after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of affliction*; For the word that is there rendered afflictions, signifieth inward troubles through the motions of sin; as well as outward afflictions, *Gal. 5. 24.* And God useth to dispense this way to his own, not only to take tryal of the sincerity of our closing with him, but to make our Faith more stedfast and sure. And no doubt, if we

we close not absolutely with Christ, (when under these temptations and tryals) we must reject our confidence as a delusion, and suppose it to be as a morning dream: therefore it were a noble and divine practice of a Christian, to close with Christ without reservation, seeing he doth dispense nothing but that which might tend to our advantage. And we would say to such as are under these temptations, that if ye endeavour to resist them, it is the most compendious and excellent way to make your hearts, which now are dying as a stone, to be as a watered garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not, and to make you strong as a Lyon, so that no temptation can rouse you up; but ye shall be enabled to tread upon the high places of the earth, and to sing Songs of Triumph over your Idols.

5. There is this likewise that hath Influence on it, our building of our Faith more upon sense, than upon Christ or his Word; and therefore it is, that Faith is so inconstant and changeable as the Moon, we not knowing what such a thing meaneth, *to hope against hope, and to be strong in Faith, giving glory to God*: And we would only say unto you that erect your confidence upon so sandy a Foundation, that when the wind and storm of Temptation shall blow, *that house shall fall to the ground*. As likewise, building of your Faith upon sense, doth abate much of your joy, and much of your precious esteem of Jesus Christ: it being Faith exercising it self upon an invisible Object, that maketh the Christian *to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*. 1 Pet. 1. 8.

6. There is this last that hath influence upon it, even our slothfulness in the exercise of our spiritual Duties, by which Faith shall be entertained. Faith is a tender Grace, and a Plant that must not be ruffled, but nourished through the sap of other precious Graces; but we grow remiss in our spiritual Duties, and do turn ourselves upon the Bed of Security, as the Door upon the hinges. And doth not our drowsiness cloath us with rags, and make us fall into a deep sleep; while as if we

we were diligent, *our souls should be made fat and rich?* Yea, sloathfulness doth not only impede assurance in this, that it hindereth the divine communication of his love and respect by which Assurance may be kept on life, *Can. 5. 2. But also, it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed man, and our want as one that travelleth:* And withal it letteth loose the Chain by which our corruptions are tyed, and maketh them to lift up their heads, for which our Assurance is much darkned and impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and despair. And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian, and is the diligent Christian; there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now *Thirdly*, we shall shut up our discourse with this, in pointing out a little, what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

I. We conceive that this woful evil doth spring and rise from that fundamental ignorance of this Truth, that there is a God, as is clear from *Heb. 11. 6.* Where that is required as a qualification of a *Comer, That he should believe that God is:* And assuredly, till once this precious Truth be imprinted upon our souls, *as with a pen of iron, and a point of a diamond,* we will look upon the Gospel as an Utopian fancy, and a deluding notion to teach unstable souls who know not the way to attain unto real blessedness. And truly it is a fault in many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ, and to dispute their interest in him before his being, and that there is such an one as is called Christ.

II Our coming unto Christ is obstructed from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him; which is clear from, *Jer. 2. 31. We are lords, we will come no*

more

more to thee. And it is evident from *Rev. 3. 16: 18.* that such a delusion as this doth overtake many, that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ; and that they can build their happiness, and establish their eternal felicity upon another Foundation. But O! that we could once win to this, to believe what we are without Christ, and to believe what we shall be in the enjoyment of him, with the one eye to discern and look upon these deep draughts that the mystery of iniquity hath imprinted upon our immortal souls, and withal to reflect upon the wages of sin which is death, and be constrained to cry, *Wo is me, for I am undone*: And with the other eye, to ascend and look to that help, that is laid upon One that is mighty, and to make use of the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, that so what we want in ourselves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ, our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world, which is clear from *Luke 14. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Matth. 22. 5, 6.* where those that are invited to come to the feast of this Gospel, they do make their Apology, and with one consent do refuse it, some pretending an impossibility to come, and some pretending an unavoidable inconvenience in coming. And O! what a ridiculous thing is that poor complement, that these deluded sinners used to Christ, *I pray you have us excused*? And is not the world the great plea and argument that they make use of, when they will not come and make use of Christ?

IV. There is this lastly, which doth obstruct ones coming to Christ, their unwillingness to be denyed to their own righteousness, which is clear from *Rom. 10. 23.* And we conceive, if once these two were believed, (which are the great Topicks, out of which all these Arguments may be brought to persuade you to embrace Christ) to wit, the infinite excellency of his Person on whom we are to believe, and the infinite loss that those do sustain who shall be eternally rejected of him. We might

might be perswaded to entertain a divine abstractedness, and holy retirement from all things that are here below, and to pitch our desires alone upon him, *who is the everlasting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher house.* O! did we once suppose the unspeakable happiness of these, whose Faith is now advanced unto everlasting Felicity and Fruition, and hath entered into that eternal possession of the Promises, might we not be constrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there?* Christ weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament; and he pipeth to us in the Gospel, but we do not dance: he is willing to draw us *with the cords of men, and with the bonds of love,* and yet we will not have him to reign over us. May not Angels laugh at our folly, that we should so undervalue this Prince of love, and should contemn him who is holden in so high esteem and reverence in these two great assemblies that are above, of Angels, and of the Spirits of just men made perfect? Christ hath now given us the first and second Summons, the day is approaching when the sad and woful Summons shall be sent against us, *of departing from him into these everlasting flames,* out of which there is no redemption: and this shall be the cape-stone of our misery, that we had once life in offer, but did refuse it: And though there were four gates standing open toward the North, by which we might have entered into that everlasting rest, yet we choose rather to *walk in the paths that lead down to death, and take hold on the chambers of hell.* O! but there are many that think the Gospel cunningly devised fables and foolishness, (they being unwilling to believe that which sense cannot comprehend, nor reason reach) and this is the reason why the Gospel is not embraced, but is rejected as an humane invention, and as a morn-ing dream, &c.

S E R M O N II.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are three great and cardinal Mysteries in the unfolding of which, all a Christians time ought to be spent. First, There is that precious and everlasting Mystery of Christs love and condescendency: which those intellectual Spirits the Angels, are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, There is that woful Mystery of the desperate deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart, which no man was ever yet able to fathom and comprehend. And thirdly, there is that precious Mystery of that eternal Felicity and blessedness that is purchased unto the Saints, that once they shall reign with Christ, not a thousand years only, but throughout all the Ages of everlasting and endless Eternity: so that there is this difference betwixt this Garden of everlasting delight that Christ hath purchased to the Saints, and that first Paradise, and Eden wherein man was placed. There was a secret gate in the first, thorow which a man that had once entered in, might go out again. But in the second and precious Eden, there is no access for going out: And all that is to be known of these three Mysteries, is much comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known. Paul was a blessed Proficient in the study of the first Mystery, and had almost attained to the highest Class of Knowledge, and yet he is constrained to profess himself to be ignorant of this. Hence is that word, Eph. 3. 19. *That ye may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* And is it not a mysterious Command, to desire People to know that which cannot be known? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that Paul pressed this upon them, that they should study to know, that this Mystery of Christs love could not be known. Jeremiah

was a blessed Proficient in the knowledge and study of the second Mystery; he had some morning and twilight discoveries of that, and though in some measure he had fathomed that deep, yet he is constrained to cry out, Chap. 17. vers. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And indeed that which Solomon saith of Kings, Prov. 25. 3. may well be said of all men, in this respect: *The Heavens for height, and the Earth for depth, and the heart of man is unsearchable.* The Apostle Paul also was a blessed Proficient in the study of the third Mystery, having some morning and twilight discoveries of the promised rest, and was once caught up to the third Heaven; and yet when he is beginning to speak of it, 1 Cor. 2. 9. He declared all men to be ignorant of the knowledge of this profound Mystery of mans blessedness, and cryeth out, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:* And if there be any thing further to be known of these Mysteries, the Grace of Faith is found worthy, amongst all the Graces of the Spirit, to open the seven Seals of these great depths of God. Is not the Grace of Faith, that whereby a Christian doth take up the invisible excellency and vertue of a dying Christ? Is not Faith that precious Grace, by which a Christian must take the Spots and Blemishes that are within himself? And is not the Grace of Faith, that precious Grace that placeth a Christian upon the Top of Mount Pisgah, and there letteth him see a sight of the Promised Land, and doth open a door in Heaven, through which a Christian is admitted to see Christ sitting upon his Throne? And Faith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency, as is clear, *That all things are possible to him that believeth,* but it hath a kind of Omniscieny, and all Knowledge, that it can take up, and comprehend all the great Mysteries of Heaven, according to that word, Prov. 28. 5. *He that seeketh the Lord, shall understand all things:* As if he had said, there is nothing dark

dark to a believing Christian, as there is nothing impossible to a believing Christian. As likewise, Faith is that Grace that must take aside the Vail that is spread over the Face of a crucified Christ: And Faith is that precious Spy, that goeth forth and taketh up these wonderful Excellencies that are in him. The Grace of Love as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to solace it self, but that which is presented unto it, by this noble and excellent Grace of Faith.

Now, before we shall speak any thing to these things, that we did propose to speak of at the last occasion: we shall yet speak a little unto some things, which are necessary to be known for the distinct up-taking of the nature of Justifying Faith, which is the great Commandment of this everlasting Gospel; and that which we would first speak to, shall be this. What is the reason and ground, that the Gospel conveyance of Righteousness and Life (and of the excellent things of this everlasting Covenant) should be through the exercise of the Grace of Faith? For it is not said in the Scripture, that Repentance justifieth, that Love justifieth, or that Mortification justifieth; but it is Faith only that justifieth, and it is Faith by which a Christian inheriteth the Promises: so that is clear, that Faith is that Conduit Pipe, through which are conveyed to us, the great Blessings of this everlasting Covenant.

I. And the first ground of it is this, it is through Faith that all our blessings may be known to be by love, and by free and unsearchable grace, as is clear, Rom. 4. 16. While the Apostle is giving a reason, why the Inheritance is conveyed to a Christian through Faith; It is of Faith (saith he) that it might be of grace: For if the Inheritance were conveyed to a Christian through a Covenant of Works, then these spotless Draughts of infinite Love, and of unsearchable Grace, should not be written on our Inheritance, as is clear, Rom. 4. 25. And it is that great design of Christ, to make his Grace conspicuous, in conveying Salvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this second ground likewise of it, that all the Promises and Blessings of this everlasting Covenant, might be sure and stedfast to us, therefore they are conveyed to us through the exercise of the Grace of Faith; as is clear Rom. 4. 16. *They are of Faith* (saith he) *that they may be sure*: or as the word is, *that they might be settled*, when the promises of life and eternal salvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience, were they not then most uncertain and unstable: But is not Heaven your everlasting Crown now stedfast unto you, seeing you have that golden Pillar of Christs everlasting Righteousness to be the foundation of your Faith, and the strength of your confidence in the day of need?

III. There is this third ground why the promises, and excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, that all boasting and gloriation might be excluded, according to that word, Rom. 3. 27. *By what law is boasting excluded? Not by the law of works but by the law of Faith?* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of Heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith; think ye not, that this shall be your first song when ye shall be within the gates of the new Jerusalem? *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it, but for one half hour to be admitted to hear these spotless Songs that are sung by these thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousand of holy Angels, that are round about his Throne? Doth not David that sweet singer of Israel, now sing more sweetly nor he did while he was here below? Doth not deserted Heman now chant forth the praises and everlasting songs of him that sitteth upon the Throne? And doth not afflicted Job now sing sweetly after his Captivity reduced, and he entered within that Land, where the voice of joy and gladness is continually heard: Would ye have a Description of Heaven? I could not give it

no term so suitable as this, Heaven is a rest without a rest, for though there remains a rest for the Righteous, yet *Rev. 4. 8. These four Beasts that stand before the Throne, they rest not night nor day, crying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty;* yet there is much divine quietness in that holy unquietness that is above.

IV. There is this last ground, why the Blessings of the Gospel, and Life and Righteousness are conveyed to us through the exercise of Faith, that the way to attain to these things might be pleasant and easie. We are certainly perswaded, that the way of winning to Heaven by a Covenant of Works, was much more unpleasant and difficult; but it is not an easie way of entering into the *Holie of Holies*, to win into it through the exercise of Faith. *Are not all Wisedoms ways pleasantness? Are not all her paths peace? Was not that just self-denial in one that said, he would not take up a Crown though it were lying at his foot. But, oh! that cursed self-denial doth possess the Breasts of many, so that though that Crown of immortal Glory and eternal Blessedness be lying at our feet, yet ye will not embrace it, nor take it up: Is not the hatred of many to Christ covered with deceit! And therefore your Iniquities shall be declared before the Congregation.*

Now that what we have spoken upon this, might be more clear, and that the Nature of justifying Faith be not mistaken, we would have you taking notice of these things.

I. That the Grace of Faith doth not justify a Christian, as it is a Work, or because of any inherent excellency and Dignity that is in this Grace above any other Graces of the Spirit; but Faith doth alone justify a Christian, instrumentally, and objectively, that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious Object of it, the Righteousness of Christ. And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this, that Faith doth justify as it closeth with Christ: but not because it closes with Christ, which

some vainly are bold to assert, because there is not any dignity or worth in the Act of Faith in closing with Christ, that can be the Foundation of our Justification, else it were to confound that precious Decree of Free Grace.

2. There is this that we would have you all knowing, that Faith is not the Instrument of Justification, (as Justification is taken in an active sense) though it is the Instrument of Justification, as it is taken in a passive sense: and the ground of this conclusion is this, because it is impossible, that any action in man, can be an Instrument of any action in God: And therefore that Phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, *That Faith justifieth*, it is thus to be resolved, *That we are justified by Faith*.

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians closing by Faith with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the Justification of a sinner, I say, there is no natural and indispensable connexion betwixt these two; but only there is a connexion of Divine appointment, and of Free Grace, though we conceive there is a natural aptitude in the Grace of Faith, to lay hold on the Righteousness of Christ, more than there is in any other Grace of the Spirit: as ye may see, there is a more natural aptitude and fitness in the hand to receive, than in any other Organ of the Body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that is, a Christian in his first closing with Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediat object of his Faith, and not Christ considered in his Personal Excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediat Object of justifying Faith, as is clear, *Rom. 3. 5. 24. 25.* And the ground of this Assertion is this, because that is the formal Object of justifying Faith, which doth formally justify the sinner, and on which Faith doth immediatly lay hold, as a ransom to satisfy Justice, and

as a Righteousness in which the Soul dare venture to be found, when it shall stand before the Judgement Seat of God; And certainly, this is Christ, as obedient to the death of the Cross. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the Soul to Christ, is not only because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, That though Faith doth alone justify, yet Faith doth not justify being alone: Hence is that which we have so often in Schools, *Fides justificat solum, licet non solitaria*. That Faith justifieth alone, though not being alone: as James doth speak, *Faith without works is dead, and is of none effect.*

Now that which secondly we shall speak to, shall be this: to point out to you some differences betwixt Justifying Faith, which is in a real Believer, and temporary Faith, which is in an Hypocrite, and one that is destitute of that everlasting Hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And first, That there is such a thing as temporary Faith, as is clear from Luke 8. 13. It is said there of some, *That they believed for a season*; yea, in Acts 8. 13. It is said of Simon Magus, (who was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity) *he believed*. And those in John 21. 23. *When they did behold the miracles, they believed on Jesus Christ*. and yet we perceive, that their Faith was not sincere, and so this was not saving Faith. And indeed ye may see a difference betwixt these two, in the very name *temporary*; for this is such a Faith, as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth vanish and pass away: for as this is certain, *that an hypocrite will not always call upon God*, John 27. 10. So that is also certain, that an Hypocrite will not always believe in God. I tell you, that the longest time that an Hypocrite doth keep his Faith, Job hath set down in his 18 Chap. verse 14. *Their hope (saith he) shall bring them to the King of terrors, and then it shall*

be rooted out of them, and their Tabernacle; their Faith will bring them no further than the gates of death, and then their Faith will flee away as a dream, and vanisheth as a vision of the night.

I I. There is this difference likewise betwixt them, that temporary Faith it closeth with Christ as a Saviour, and for Righteousness; but it closeth not with Christ as a Prince, and for Sanctification; but justifying Faith taketh Christ as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Saviour: and if Solomon did discern who was the true Mother of the Child; by that, that she who should have the Child divided, was not the Mother of the Child; so we may say, that they who would divide Christ in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not amongst those, who are actually made partakers; of the Adoption of Children: there is somewhat of this pointed at in *Joh. 6. 66.* Where that which made many who were his Disciples (and did once believe) desert him, was because of the hardness of his Command, *this is a hard saying, who can bear it?* And it is certain, that it is a greater difficulty for a Christian to take Christ as a Prince, than a Saviour: for by that he must make an absolute Resignation of himself over to Christ, never to be reduced. O! when saw you such a sight of Christ, that you were constrained to cry out (without a complement) to him, *Truly, I am thy Servant, I am thy servant?* Or were ye never ravished with one of his eyes: nor overtaken with one chain of his neck? Believe me, they who see him, do believe that his Commands are not grievous.

III. There is this difference, that temporary Faith is attained unto, without the exercise of the Law; but justifying Faith is not attained to without some measure of the exercise of the Law. This is clear, *Mark 4. 6.* Where speaking of these temporary Believers, it is said of them. *The Fruit immediately sprang up, &c.* Are there are not some (it may be here) who think they do believe; and yet were never in any measure trembling under the discovering and condemning power of the Law.

opened up.

Law 1 Is not that a Mystery, that one should bring forth without travelling? And is not this a Mystery in Christianity, that one should believe before he hath found the Pangs of the New-Birth? I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our foot; for there are many that take up Religion before Religion take them up. But would ye know the Properties of a Christians Faith? *It is a begotten Faith, 1 Pet. i. 2.* and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleasure: And I would only say these two things to you; be persuaded of this, that Hypocrisie may be spun with a very small threed: so that the most discerning Christian can not take up that desperate Enmity that is in them. How long did *Judas* lurk under the name of a Saint, even with those that were most discerning? And there is this that we would say, that among all these *that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* Hypocrites in Sion shall have the bitterest Cup of Divine Indignation presented unto them. Hence it is, that Christ when he would tell the worst company that one shall have in hell, it is always this: ye shall go to that place where Hypocrites and Sinners are: and so it would be of your concernment, that by the Candle of the Lord, ye would search the inward parts of the Belly, before ye go down to the Grave with a Lie in your right hand; a deceiving heart having turned you aside. We confess it is sad to consider these anxious Disappointments that many in those days shall once meet with.

IV. But there is this last difference betwixt justifying Faith, and temporary Faith, That there are three precious effects of justifying Faith, which a temporary Believer cannot win to.

1. To be denyed to all his Enjoyments and Attainments, and walk humbly under them, for we may say, that it is impossible for an Hypocrite to be denyed to his enjoyments, he maketh such a Deity of them, and worships them, or rather he worshippeth himself in them.

There are three great Graces that a Hypocrite doth pursue after, (though he rather seeketh them as Gitts than a Graces) Knowledge, Prayer, and Humility : And though it be but little that he can attain of any of the three, (or rather nothing in a saving way) yet least of all can he attain to the last ; yea, we may judge that there is always within his bosom a standing conviction, that he could never win to that Grace of Humility. O ! could ye never win to this, to count your own Righteousness as filthy Rags, and to rejoyce alone in the Righteousness of a crucified Saviour. I would press this upon you by the way, (O ! Christians of this Generation) forget your perfections, and remember your imperfections ; have a holy Oblivion of your Attainments, but have a Divine remembrance of your short comings ; look more to what is before unperfected, not what is behind, and thus shall you evidence true justifying Faith.

2. It is an effect of justifying Faith, to be under some constant and Divine impression of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you who believe, Christ is precious* ; It is not said, that Christ was precious, or shall be precious, but it is said, *He is precious*, which doth import, (as we use to speak) a continued act. Did ye never know what it was to dwell twenty four hours under the impression of the matchless excellency and precious worth of a crucified Saviour ? I will pose you with this ; are there not some here (and else where) that pass under the notion of Saints, that never knew what it was, to dwell half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of the preciousness of Jesus Christ ? So that we profess, we cannot tell whether we shall call him precious or undervalued ; but we may conjoyn these two names together, that he is precious, and yet undervalued Christ.

3. By true justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to Mortification of his invisible and predominant Lusts, which is impossible for a temporary Believer to win to.

And

And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it goeth out? I will tell you the great Mortification of Hypocrites, the Devil was living in them, as one that was a black one, and now he cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of Light: he was living in them before, by the Spirit of Profanitie, and now he liveth in them, by the Spirit of Hypocrisie, and counterfeiting of these things that were never clear Attainments, while it is the noble dignity of Faith, Acts 15. 9. *To purifie the heart.* But are there not many here, who never knew what it was to mortifie one lust for Christ? Can such a delusion overtake you, O Atheists! that ye shall reign with Christ, if ye die not with him? There is an Opinion yented in these days, that there may be Repentance in Heaven, and I think it would seem, that the Christians of this Age have much of that Opinion, we are so little in Repentance while we are here below; but know, that Faith and Sanctification are two inseparable Companions: And let me tell you, if ye would know the Compend of the precious exercise of Faith, it is this, Faith hath three great things that it perpetually contemplates and views. 1. Faith looketh to the Promise, and there it doth rejoyce and rest upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the Duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out, *Here I am, I will obey and hearken to the voice of thy word.* And 3. Faith looketh to the Crown, and there it doth exult and sweetly rejoyce in Divine expectations, And O! what a sight is that, to behold that everlasting Prince standing at the end of our Race, having a Crown in his right hand, with this Motto engraven on it, *He that persevereth to the end shall be saved?* And what a Faith suppose ye shall it be thought, when we shall get on that immortal Crown of Blessedness? What think ye is the exercise of these that are above? O! Heaven, heaven. If we did know it, would we not be in an holy Extasie of desire, till we were there? And blessed be He eternally, that hath purchased that precious Felicity to us.
Now

Now we shall at this time shut up our Discourse, by speaking a little to these things in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurance of his interest in God, and is put to the divine workings of the Grace of Faith, for there are some Sealing times to a Christian.

I. The first time of the Sealing is, after the mortification of some predominant Lust and Idol, then they are admitted to read their Names in these Precious and Ancient Records of Heaven, and to see (in these Books) their own unworthy Names written by the hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear, *Rev. 2. 17. To him that overcometh will I give a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, that no man knows, saving he that receiveth it.* And from that, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* Believe me, more Mortification would make more believing; but would ye know the Original of Misbelief: It is the want of the exercise of spiritual Mortification of our Lusts. I know not where the most part of us intendeth to lodge at night, but this is certain, that we live with much contentment with our Lusts, and these predominant Idols, that do so much possess us.

II. It is readily a Sealing time to a Christian, when he is admitted to the divine Enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ: When was it that the Spouse cryed out so often, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it not when she was brought to the banqueting House, and his Banner over her was love? Believe me, more Communion with an absent Christ would make more Intimation (in a divine manner) of our Peace with him. We desire to bless those that are above the reach of all these Disputings and Questions that we are so much subject unto.

III. This is a Sealing time to a Christian, when he is much in the exercise of secret Prayer, and of much conversing, and corresponding with God in that Duty, as is clear from that word in *Dan. 9. 21.* When Daniel was praying; at the Evening Oblation, in the *3. 2v.* he meets with a divine intimation, that is peace with God;

A man greatly beloved of God, as the Original hath it, O man of great desires for he was desirous indeed, & precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This also is a Sealing time to a Christian when he is called to the exercise of some great Work, & is to be put upon some eminent holy Employment; this is clear, Jer. 1. 5. Where *Jeremiah* being called to preach the Gospel unto such a rebellious People, then he hath his eternal Election declared unto him: *before thou wast formed in the womb, I knew thee.* Christ, as it were giveth them that, to be meat to them for forty days, and that in the strength of it they may go many a days Journey.

V. There is also another Sealing time, when a Christian is first begotten to a precious and everlasting hope; for when at first Christians begin to be acquainted with Christ, even then sometimes he declareth to them his boundless and everlasting love. And that is the ground why some of these, who are but Babes in Christ, are so much in the exercise of Diligence, so much in the exercise of the Grace of Love, and so much in the exercise of the Grace of Tenderness, it is even because of the solemn Impression of their interest in Christ; that as it were, they are dayly taken in to read their own Names in legible Letters in the Lambs Book of Life.

VI. And there is this last time, that is a Sealing time to a Christian, and that is, when he is put under some sad afflicting Dispensation: *When the furnace is hot seven times more than ordinary:* Then doth God condescend to manifest himself to his own. When was it that *John* met with most of the Revelations of Heaven? Was it not when he was in the Isle of *Patmos* for the Testimony of *Jesus Christs Kingdom*, and patience of our blessed Lord? Revelation 1. 19. And in that place; 2. Cor. 4. 6. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

Now we would press you to be more serious in the exercise of this precious Grace. And I shall tell you the

Compen

Compend of Christianity in these few words. 1. By Faith, to solace your selves in Christs invisible Vertues and Excellencies. And 2. By Hope, to be viewing that precious Crown, and these everlasting Dignities that are to be given to the Saints. And 3. By Mortification, to be crucifying your Idols. And 4. By Patience, to be possessing your Souls, until once ye shall pass through that dark Land, to that Valley of everlasting Delight. And as for those that contemn and undervalue the Blood of this everlasting Covenant, (and I would have all those that delight not in closing with Christ, and these who have not misbelief as their Cross, to consider this) *The wrath of the living and eternal God; doth abide upon them who do not believe*: according to that word, Joh. 3. 36. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him*: it is a remarkable Phrase, because of this, the the wrath of God will not be as a Pilgrim to a Misbeliever, that will turn aside to tarry but for a night, but the wrath of God (to them who will not believe) shall be their household Companion, and shall dwell with them: and wo, wo to them eternally, who have this sad and everlasting companion to abide with them, *the wrath of a living God*. There is one thing we would have these knowing, that among all these who are eternally to be debarred from Jesus Christ, Misbelievers are put in the foremost rank: Rev. 21. 8. *There he is to put away the fearful and unbelieving*: And from 2 Thess. 1. 18. *When Christ shall come from Heaven with ten thousand of his Saints*, (What to do?) It is even to execute vengeance on those that obey not the truth of the Gospel: That is, who do not believe. And I pose your own hearts with this, whether or not your names be written there in that Roll, among those who shall be cut off? And that word, 2 Thess. 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed not, but took pleasure in unrighteousness*. O! but the wrath of a dying Christ, and of a crucified Saviour, is dreadful! It is more sad and terrible, than the wrath of God should have been if Christ had

had not died. I will tell you (O Hypocrites in Sion) the worst news that ever was published in your ears, and it is this, Christ died and rose again, and to those that are begotten to a lively Hope, they are glad Tidings of great Joy, (and therein they may comfort themselves) but ye may wear a rough Garment to deceive, and go to Heaven in your own apprehension: But O! the sad disappointment that is waiting on many such. And to close with this, we would obtest you, as ye would answer to your terrible and dreadful Judge, that shall stand one day upon his Throne, which he shall fix in the Clouds, we obtest you by all the Joys of Heaven, and we obtest you by all the everlasting Pains of Hell, and we obtest you by all the Curses that are written within the Volumn of this Book, and by all the sweet and comfortable Promises that are in this everlasting Gospel, and by the Love that ye owe to your Immortal Souls, and as ye would not crucifie Christ afresh, believe, and embrace the offers which are presented now unto you. Know ye whether or not this shall be the last Summons that ye shall get to believe? That so, if ye do reject it, Christ shall come from Heaven, and pronounce that sad and lamentable Sentence unto you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.* Now, to him that can bless these things to you, we desire to give praise.

SERMON

S E R M O N I I I.

1. John. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

IT was a Command that Solomon gave unto his Son, Prov. 22. 26. *That he should not be surety for Debt, nor should be one of those that stricken his hand; But, O! what spotless Breaches of that Command hath our blessed Lord Jesus committed, when he did condescend to be surety for our Debt, and to pay that was impossible for us to satisfy? Hath not Christ made a precious Exchange with sinners? He wreathed about his own precious neck, that Bond and Yoke of our Iniquities, and hath given to us that unweariable, Ease, and portable Yoke of his Commandments; among which this is one, That we should believe on him, Spotless Christ was made sin for us, that sinful we, might be made the righteousness of God in him: And is not this the Condemnation of the World, that we will not believe in him? that we will not delight our selves in loving of him. And I would say this to you, that though you would weep the one half of your days, and pray the other half: Yet, if ye want this Noble Grace of Faith, Your Righteousness shall be but like a menservants Cloath, and filthy Rags before him: For what is praying without believing, but a taking of his blessed Name in vain? What is conferring upon the most divine and precious Truths of God, without believing? Is it not a lying to the Holy Ghost, and a flattering of God with our Mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a sweet Harmony that is now made up betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel. The Law bringeth us to Christ as a Saviour, and Christ bringeth us back again to the Law*

Law to be a Rule of our walk, to which we must subject our selves. So, then would ye know the compend of a Christians walk? *It is a sweat travelling betwixt Mount Sinai and Mount Sion, betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians Conscience, before his closing with Christ, there is so much the more precious & excellent advantages waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law: that it is the way to win to much establishment in the Faith, when once we begin to close with Christ. O Christians, would ye know that which maketh the Superstructure and building of Grace to be within you, *as a bowing wall, and as a tottering fence?* (So that oftentimes ye are in hazard to raze the Foundation) it is this, ye were not under the exercise of the Law before your believing in Jesus Christ. There are some who do not abide three days at Mount Sinai, and these shall not dwell many days at Mount Sion.

II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, it maketh Christ precious to a mans Soul. What is that which filleth the Soul of a Christian with many high and excellent thoughts of Christ? Is it not this, to have the Law registrating our Bond, and putting us (as we use to speak) to the Horn, that is, to have the Law cursing us, and using the Sentence of Condemnation against us. That which maketh us to have such low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Christ, is, because the most part of us are not acquainted with the deep and serious exercise of the Law: that is a Mystery to the most part of Christians Practice. Ye know that there were four Streams which went out from the Paradise of God, into which man was first placed: And so we may say, that there are four golden Streams, by which lost and destroyed men are brought back again to this *Eden and Paradise* of everlasting delights. First, there is the precious stream
of

of Christs righteousness, by which we must be justified. And secondly, There is that stream of his Sanctification, by which we must be purified. Thirdly, there is that stream of the Wisdom of Christ, by which we must be conducted through this Wilderness wherein we have lost our way. And fourthly, There is the stream of Christs Redemption, by which we must be ~~delivered~~ from the power of our enemies, and must turn the Battel in the Gate. It is by the Redemption of Christ, that we shall once sing that triumphant Song, *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* O! but all these streams will be sweet and refreshing to a Soul that is hotly pursued by the Law, so long as we see not the ugliness of our Leprosie in the Glass of the Law, we have our own *Abana* and *Parpar*, that we think may do our turn; but when once our case is truly laid open to us, then we will be content to wash our selves in *Jordan* seven times.

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, that it maketh a Christian live constantly under the impression of the sinfulness of sin. What is it that maketh sin exceeding sinful to a Christian? Is it not this, he hath been fourty days in *Abels* School? And we conceive that the ground why such Fools as we, make a mock of sin, is, because we know not what it is to be under the power of his Wrath, and and the apprehensions of the Indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to speak of: We told you, that the first occasion that we spake upon these words, that there were many excellent things concerning the Grace of Faith, holden forth in them. The first thing (which was holden forth concerning this radical Grace of Faith) was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, and giving obedience to this command: which we cleared to be holden forth, not only from the scope, but also from the nature of this command. And now to speak a little to the point, we shall propose these considerations,

ons, that may abundantly shew how adyantagious a thing this excellent Grace of Faith is?

I. The first consideration that speaketh it, is this, That Faith maketh Christ precious to a Soul, according to that word, *1 Pet. 3. 7. To you that believe, Christ is precious.* And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Christ more precious to a Soul, nor Sense, or any other thing can make him. And first, Faith maketh Christ more precious nor Sense, because the estimation which the Grace of Faith hath of Christ, it is builded upon the excellency of his Person: but the estimation of Sense, it is builded upon the excellency of his Actings: so that because he is such to them; therefore they love and esteem him. But that heroick Grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christs Person, and that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith maketh Christ more precious than Sense, because Sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his face, and in his hands, and in his feet: but Faith looketh to that Love which is in his heart. Sense will cry forth, *Who is like to thee? whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the Cedar: whose hands are as gold rings, set with Beryl, and whose legs are like pillars of Marble, set in sockets of Gold.* Sense will look to the smiles of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his Dispensations and Actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* But the Grace of Faith, solaceth it self in the Fountain from whence all these springs and sweet Inundations of Love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious than Sense; because Faith looketh not only to what Christ is presently, but unto what Christ is from eternity before time, and what Christ shall be unto eternity after time, but Sense only doth look to what Christ is presently. And ye must conceive, that the sweet Travellings of Faith betwixt infinite Love from eternity before, and infinite Love unto eternity after, must make Faith to fall in a Sea of wondering, and raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire.

desire and estimation. Fourthly, we may likewise add, that the Impression of the preciousness of Christ, which Sense maketh open the Soul, is not so constant, nor so single, as that which Faith doth make. O but the Grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look to Christ, and letteth him see Christ cloathed with Ornaments of Glory and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ rather that it may see his Miracles, and Love, and that it may be fed with Loaves; but Faith follows Christ, for himself above all.

II. The second Consideration, to speak the advantage of it, is, that the Grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God; so that *whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith, he shall receive it.* It is the noble Gift that was once given to Faith, that it never should seek any thing and be denied. according to that Word in *Matth. 21, 22.* *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it.* And that word in *Job. 15. 7.* *Abide in me,* that is, believe; and the Promise is annexed to this: *Whatsoever ye shall ask ye shall receive.* And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that it we obey this Command of Faith; *Whatsoever we shall ask of God, we shall receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this; First, that often times Christ putteth a Blank in a Christians hand; who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matthew. 20. 32.* Is there not an ample Blank put into that Mans hand? *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up that blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest Steps of Christs matchless condescendency, that often times when his own have sought in their Presumption a Blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark 10. 35, 36.* the two Disciples who present this desire to Christ, *We desire, say they, that whatsoever we ask, thou should give it un-*

us. And presently that is answered, *What will ye that we should do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christs boundless good will to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him, it may be cleared in that word, *John. 16. 24.* where he charges his Disciples with this: *Hitherto, saith he, have ye asked me nothing;* ye must not suppose that *Peter, James and John* never sought a suit of Christ: but the meaning of that expreſſion in this: Ye sought nothing in comparison of that which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.

III. There is this third Consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: It is that Grace that keepeth all the Graces of the Spirit in Life and Exercise, Faith is that higher Wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower Wheels do move: If so we may speak, Faith is that *primum Mobile*, that first moves and turns about all the lower Graces of the Spirit, according to that, *2 Pet. 1. 5. Add to your Faith, Vertue, and to your vertue, Patience, and to your Patience, brotherly Kindness.* First, the Grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Love, as is clear, *Ephesians 3. 17.* Where these two Graces are subjoyned. As likewise from *Rom. 5. 1.* compared with *verse 5.* *Being justified by Faith.* Then this effect followeth upon it, *The love of God is shed abroad in our own hearts.* And so it is certain, that Faith keepeth Love in Life. Faith being the Spy of the Soul, and that Intelligencer and precious Messenger: It goeth out and bringeth in Objects unto Love. Faith draweth aside the Vail, and Love sitteth down and solaceth it self in the Discoveries of Faith. Secondly, the Grace of Faith likewise it keepeth the Grace of Mortification in exercise, as is clear, not only from *Ephesians 6. 6.* but from *1 Joh. 5. 4.* *This is our Victory whereby we overcome the world, even our Faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth Mortification in exercise, and advanceth Holinesse,

desire and estimation. Fourthly, we may likewise add, that the Impression of the preciousness of Christ, which Sense maketh open the Soul, is not so constant, nor so single, as that which Faith doth make. O but the Grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look to Christ, and letteth him see Christ cloathed with Ornaments of Glory and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ rather that it may see his Miracles, and Love, and that it may be fed with Loaves; but Faith follows Christ, for himself above all.

II. The second Consideration, to speak the advantage of it, is, that the Grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God; so that *whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith, he shall receive it.* It is the noble Gift that was once given to Faith, that it never should seek any thing and be denied. according to that Word in *Matth. 21, 22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it.* And that word in *Job. 15. 7. Abide in me,* that is, believe; and the Promise is annexed to this: *Whatsoever ye shall ask ye shall receive.* And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that it we obey this Command of Faith; *Whatsoever we shall ask of God, we shall receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this; First, that often times Christ putteth a Blank in a Christians hand, who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matthew. 20. 32. Is there not an ample Blank put into that Mans hand? What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up that blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest Steps of Christs matchless condescendency, that often times when his own have sought in their Presumption a Blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark 10. 35, 36. the two Disciples who present this desire to Christ, We desire, say they, that whatsoever we ask, thou should give it un-*

us. And presently that is answered, *What will ye that we should do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christs boundless good will to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him, it may be cleared in that word, *John. 16. 24.* where he charges his Disciples with this: *Hitherto, saith he, have ye asked me nothing;* ye must not suppose that *Peter, James and John* never sought a suit of Christ: but the meaning of that expression in this: Ye sought nothing in comparison of that which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.

III. There is this third Consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: It is that Grace that keepeth all the Graces of the Spirit in Life and Exercise, Faith is that higher Wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower Wheels do move: If so we may speak, Faith is that *primum Mobile*, that first moves and turns about all the lower Graces of the Spirit, according to that, *2 Pet. 1. 5. Add to your Faith, Vertue, and to your vertue, Patience, and to your Patience, brotherly Kindness.* First, the Grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Love, as is clear, *Ephesians 3. 17.* Where these two Graces are subjoyned. As likewise from *Rom. 5. 1.* compared with *verse 5.* *Being justified by Faith. Then this effect followeth upon it, The love of God is shed abroad in our own hearts.* And so it is certain, that Faith keepeth Love in Life. Faith being the Spy of the Soul, and that Intelligencer and precious Messenger: It goeth out and bringeth in Objects unto Love. Faith draweth aside the Vail, and Love sitteth down and solaceth it self in the Discoveries of Faith. Secondly, the Grace of Faith likewise it keepeth the Grace of Mortification in exercise, as is clear, not only from *Ephesians 6. 6.* but from *1 Joh. 5. 4.* *This is our Victory whereby we overcome the world, even our Faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth Mortification in exercise, and advanceth Holinesse,
not

not only because of this, that Faith is that Grace that presenteth to a Christian, the absolute purity and spotless holiness of Jesus Christ; but also because it maketh them esteeme their Idols tasteless, as the white of an Egg, and they become unto them as their sorrowful meat. The best principle of Mortification is this, the discoveries of the invisible Vertues of Jesus Christ: that Mortification which ariseth from the lovely discoveries of the Excellencies of Jesus Christ, is most real and abiding; as these waters which rise from the highest Springs, are not only constant, but likewise most deep and excellent. Thirdly, Faith likewise hath influence upon Mortification, as it doth take hold of that infinite strength that is in Christ, by which a Christian is enabled to mortifie his Corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewise maketh application of the *blood of sprinkling*, by which we are purified from dead Works. Fifthly, Likewise the Grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Humility, as is clear, Rom. 3. 27. *By what law, saith he, is boasting excluded? It is not by the law of works, but by the law of Faith.* Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Joy, as is clear, Rom. 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* So that ye see the proper fruit of Faith, is *joy in the Holy Ghost*. And certainly, did we believe more, we should rejoyce more. Seventhly, and lastly, Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Hope, for it is impossible for Hope to be in lively exercises, except Faith once be exercised, which may be a shame unto you; for how can we hope to attain the thing that is promised, except our Faith first close with the Promise? So there is this difference betwixt the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Hope; the Grace of Faith closeth with the Promises; but the Grace of Hope, it closeth with the thing that is promised.

IV. There is this fourth Consideration, that may speak out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that

that Grace by which a Christian doth attain to most divine fellowship, and constant correspondency with Heaven. Would ye have that question resolved and determined, What is the best way, *Not to stir up our beloved, nor awake him until he please?* It is this, be much in the Grace of Faith: this is clear, from Eph. 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith:* By the exercise of all other Graces, Christ is but a sojourner, *That turneth aside to tarry but for a night;* but by the exercise of this Grace, he cometh to take up house with us. I will tell you what Faith is, it is a Ladder that reacheth between Heaven and Earth; by the Steps of which, a Christian doth dayly go up to Heaven, and converse with the higher House; Faith is that Grace (as the Apostle speaketh) by which we have access to the Throne of his Grace. Faith ushers in the Believer to the Throne: and without it he cannot have access there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exercise of Faith. A believing Christian is a praying Christian: according to that Word in *Mark 9. 24.* where these two are conjoyned together, *Lord, I believe:* and then he falleth to his prayer presently after that confession, *Help thou my unbelief.* And it is clear from *Psal. 63. 1.* *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee!* And sometimes Faith is a most impatient Grace: but we may always say of it, that it is a most diligent Grace. Oh! is it not the neglect of this precious exercise of Faith, and of the duty of secret Prayer, that makes our leannels testifie to our face, and maketh our souls a barren wilderness? I am persuaded of this, that since Christ had any followers, and since ever this everlasting Gospel was preached in Paradise, the exercise of secret Prayer was never so much neglected. We have turned over all our Prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is to rise at midnight and call upon God, and to enquire after our Maker under the silent watches of the night.

O but it is a sweet diversion from sleep, to retire our selves (in the silent seasons of the night) from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converse with that invisible Majesty.

VI. There is this sixth consideration to point out the advantage of Faith: That Faith is that Grace that doth facilitate a Christians obedience, and maketh it most pleasant and easie: This is clear from Heb. 1. 8. *By Faith Abraham when commanded to go to a strange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whether he went.* The word may be rendered, *He did chearfully obey.* And verse 17. *By faith he offered up his only Son.* Would ye know the reason why his commands are your burden, and why his Precepts are your Crosses? It is because of this, *Ye do not believe:* And so it is most certain, that it is impossible for a Christian to attain to a pleasant way of obedience, without the exercise of Faith. Faith holdeth up the Crown to a Christian, and this Crown maketh him to obey; Faith gathereth strength from Christ, and that strength maketh Obedience very easie. Faith taketh up the excellency of Christ, and this maketh a Christian to look upon his duty, more as his dignity than his duty. And we are perswaded of this, that our Chariot-wheel should move more swiftly, (*like the Chariots of Amminadab*) if we were more in the exercise of the Grace of Faith. Would ye know an answer to that question, What is first most requisite for a Christian while here below? Faith. And what secondly is most requisite? Faith. And what thirdly is most requisite for a Christian? Even Faith; Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our Service and Prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the Prayer of a Christian that is not in Faith? It is *a smoke in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day.* The unbelievers sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord. This is clear from Heb. 11. 4. *By faith*
Abel

Abel offered up unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; and we conceive that there are many unanswerable prayers which we do put up, because we want that noble exercise of Faith.

VIII. And lastly, we shal likewise add this, that Faith is the Grace by which a Christian hath that perfect and immediat sight (as it were) of great things that are promised to him; Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of God, according to that word, *Heb. 11. 1. Faith is the evidence of things not seen*: And that noble paradox, that is said of Faith, *Hob. 11. 27. By faith Moses saw him that is invisible*. Is it not an impossible thing, to see that which cannot be seen? But the meaning of it is this, That faiths discoveries of God, are as certain and sure, as the discoveries of our bodily eyes are: Faith is an intelligent Grace; yea, it is a most sure and infallible Grace; What will faith not do? And what can ye do who want faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of faith a little more, we shal propose to you the disadvantages of that woful sin of unbelief.

I. There is this disadvantage of the sin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that in *Tir. 1. 15. But unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Their prayer is unclean: yea, (as Solomon speaketh) their plowing is sin: yea, their going about the most excellent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that word, Rom. 14. 23. Whatever is not of Faith, is sin*. So the want of Faith is the great polluter of all our actions, and of all our performances.

II. There is this second disadvantage of misbelief, that it is impossible for one in the exercise of unbelief, to mortifie a lust or idol: and we may allude unto these words in *Matthew 17. 20. When his Disciples*

ciples came to him, and asked this Question, *Why could we not cast out this devil?* That was given as an answer, *because of your unbelief*: Unbelief is that which taketh up arms for our idols; and doth most strongly defend them: for there is nothing that will kill corruption so much, as the exercise of Faith; and when all this is laid aside, we have laid by our weapons, and have in a manner concluded a treaty of peace with our Idols, that we shal not offend them, if they offend not us.

III. There is this disadvantage that waiteth upon the sin of unbelief, that such an one cannot win nor attain to the grace of Establishment, *but is always as the waves of the sea, tossed to and fro*, until once he win to the exercise of Faith, as is clear from *Isai. 7.2. Except ye believe, ye shall not be established.*

IV. There is this disadvantage that waiteth on it; it is the mother of hardness and stupidity of heart, according to that word in *Mark 6. 14.* Where he upbraideth them because of their unbelief: and then what danger followeth? to wit, *hardness of heart*: this is clear also from *Acts 19. 9.* Where these two sister-devils are so conjoynd and locked together, *unbelief and hardness of heart*, because it is unbelief indeed, that hindereth all the Graces, by which the Graces of Tenderness must be maintained.

V. There is this disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, that it is big with Child of Apostacy from God, and of defection from him, according to that Word, *Heb. 3. 11. Beware lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief* (and there the fruit of it) *to depart from the living God.* And certainly it is no wonder, that unbelief travel in Birth, till that cursed Child of Apostacy be brought forth; not only because of this, that an unbeliever loseth the thoughts of the excellency of Christ, but also because he increaseth in his thoughts of love toward his Idols: for Christ doth decrease in those who misbelieve, and their Idols do increase in their love, and in their desires, and in their estimation.

VI. There

VI. There is this sixth disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many signal workings and tokens of the love and favour of the most High, according to that sad word that is in *Mat.* 13. 58. at the close, *He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were, laid a restraint on Christ, that he could not effectuate these things which he was willing to perform: And (to shut up our discourse at this time) I would only add these two aggravations, which may somewhat enforce what we have spoken; (I say) there are these two aggravations in the sin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (and also his call) to believe. 1. That after Christ hath given most sensible discoveries of himself, *wherein ye have seen him*, as it were, *face to face*, yet ye will not believe: this is clear from *Joh. 6. 36. Though ye have seen me, saith Christ, yet ye do not believe in me.* There is not a manifestation of Christs presence, but it is a witness against you, because of your unbelief. Would ye hear the voice of sense, that is rectified? It is this, believe on the Son of God. Secondly, That notwithstanding of the signal demonstrations of the power of Christ, yet, though it were the mortifying of some Lust and Idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of his love to them. Christ preacheth Faith by his Word, He preacheth Faith by His Sufferings, He preacheth Faith by his Dispensations, He preacheth Faith by His Promises, He preacheth Faith by His Rods; and if these five instruments will not ingage your hearts to believe, what can move them? Do not his two wounds in his precious hands, preach out this point of Faith, believe him: Doth not that hole opened in his side, preach this Doctrine, *That we should believe in him?* And these two wounds, that he received in his precious feet, do they not preach this, *That we should believe on a crucified Saviour?* And we would only say this, that sometime it is the case of his own, that after

the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and also after some desires to close with Christ, yet they find inability to close with him. Is it not certain that to will (*to believe*) is some time present with you? but how to perform ye know not. And I would have a Christian making this fourfold use of such a Dispensation as that, (which is most ordinarily) when convictions of our duty to believe and some desires to close with Christ, is not followed with actual performances.

1. To study to have your Convictions more deeply rooted within you; for it doth sometimes follow, that resolutions and mints to believe, are not blest with actual believing; because the conviction of our duty to believe, is not deeply imprinted upon our Conscience.

2. Be convinced of that desperate enmity (*and that mystery of iniquity*) that is within you, that ye can have some will to do, without ability to perform, We confess, it is not an ordinary disease in these days, to have such a contrariety betwixt a Christians Will and his Practice, our Will for the most part being no better than our Practice; But sometime it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death.*

2. That ye would be much in the imploying of Christ, that as he hath given you to will, so also he might make you to do. Christ is about to convince his own in such a dispensation as that, *That faith is the gift of God.* Faith is so noble a Grace, that it cannot be spinned out from our resolutions, nor from our endeavours; Faith is such a divine plant, *as the Fathers right hand must plant in our souls.*

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the Grace of Faith (for the difficulty of attaining to any thing, may speak out the excellency of that thing) there is no sin but it may be easily win at; There is an easiness and facility to overtake the paths of our idols: but the Graces of the Spirit are so excellent things, that we must fight before we attain them; and you who are strangers to Christ Jesus (and have never

never known what it is to close with him) we would request you, in Christs Name, to be reconciled to him. What know ye, O men, (or rather Atheists) but this shal be the last Summonds that ye shal get to believe? And because ye disobey this precious Summonds, there shal be one presented to you that ye cannot sit. I remember of one man, who looking upon many thousands that were under his command, weeped over them, when he considered how that within a few years all these should be laid in their graves, and should be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment, to be trying our selves how it is with us; We are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wish that but one of each ten that are within these doors, were Heirs of the Grace of Life, and had the solid and spiritual expectation of Heaven. I think, if Christ were to come presently to speak to us, he might not only say to each twelve that are here, *One of you shall betray me*: but we are afraid, that he would say to each twelve that are here, *Eleven of you shall betray me, and but one only shall pass free*. O doth it not concern you, to enquire where you shal rest at night, when the long shadow of the everlasting evening shal be stretched out upon you? I think there are some that are so settled upon their lees, that if they were one day in Hell, and saw all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on Earth, they would not repent. And more, there are some, that take them up one day to see the joys of Heaven, and bring them back again, they would not pursue after these blessed and everlasting enjoyments. O is not Christ much undervalued by us? But I must tell you this, *One wo is past, but behold another wo is fast coming*. O the screeching of these Spirits that are entred into their everlasting Prison house, out of which there is no Redemption. What shal be your choice, when Christ shal come in the Clouds?

Clouds? I am perswaded, there are many, to whom at that day, this Doctrine would be ravishing, viz. *That there were not a death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity.* Oh! will ye believe *That the sword of the justice of God is sheathed in Heaven, and shall come down to make a sacrifice, not in the land of Idumea, nor in the land of Bozra; but he is to make a sacrifice among his people who seemed to make a Covenant with him by sacrifice.* Ah, ah, shal we say that? If that argument were used to many, that within forty days they should be at their long and everlasting home, they would yet spend thirty nine of these days in taking pleasure upon their lusts: I am perswaded of this, that there are many who think that the way betwixt Heaven and Earth, is but one days journey; they think they can believe in one day, and triumph at night: But O! it shal be a short triumph that such Believers as these shal have. Therefore, O study to close with a crucified Saviour, rest on him by Faith, delight your selves in him with love, and let your selves be longing for the day when that voice shal be heard in Heaven, (and O how sweetly shal it be sung?) *Arise, arise, arise, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away: for behold your winter is past, your everlasting summer is come, and the time of the singing of birds is near: When Christ shal come over these mountains of Bethel, he shal cry, Behold I come: and the Soul shal sweetly answer, Come blessed Lord Jesus, Come, O what a life shal it be: that with these two arms ye should eternally incircle Christ, and hold him in your arms, or rather be incircled by him? Wait for him, for he shall come, and his reward is with him, and he shal once take home the wearied travellers of hope.*

SERMON

S E R M O N I V.

I John 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are two great and excellent Gifts, which God in the depth of his boundless love hath bestowed on his own. First, There is that infinit Gift and Royal Donation, his own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, which is called, *The gift of God, Joh. 4. 10.* And secondly, There is that excellent Gift of the Grace of Faith, which God hath bestowed upon his own, which is also called, *The gift of God, Ephes. 2. 8. Faith is the gift of God.* And is it not certain, that these two gracious Gifts ought to ingage our Souls and Hearts much unto him? Infinit Majesty could give no Gift greater than His Son, and Infinit Poverty could receive no other Gift so suitable as Christ; It was the most noble Gift that Heaven could give, and it is the greatest advantage for Earth to receive it. And we could wish that the most part of the study and practice of men (that is spent in pursuit of these low and transient vanities) might be once taken up in that precious pursuit after CHRIST: We could wish that all the questions and debates of the time were turned over into that Soul-concerning question. *What shall we do to be saved?* and that all the Questions, Controversies, and Contentions of the time were turned over into that divine Contention and Heavenly Debate, *Who should be most for Christ, who should be most for exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown,* and that all our judging and searching of other mens practices and estate, might be turned over into that useful search, to prove and examine our selves whether we be in the Faith or not. And I would ask you this question, what are your thoughts

concerning precious Christ, seeing he is that noble Object of Faith? We would only have you taking along these things, by which Christ may be much commended to your hearts: First, There was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchless beauty and transcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy. There is Soul-conquering vertue in the Face of Christ, and there is a Heart-captivating, and overcoming power in the beauty of Jesus Christ. This first sight that ever persecuting *Saul* got of Christ, it brought him unto an endless Captivity of Love. Secondly, There is this that we would say of precious Christ, which may engage our Souls unto Him, that for all the wrongs Believers do to Christ, yet hath He never an evil word of them to His Father, but commends them: which is clear from that of *John* 17. 6. where Christ doth commend the Disciples to the Father for the Grace of Obedience, *They have kept thy word*: and for the Grace of Faith, verse 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me*: And yet were not the Disciples most defective in Obedience, both in this, *That they did not take up their Cross and follow Christ*: and also in that, they did not adhere to Him in the day that He was brought to *Cajaphas* Hall? and were they not most defective in the Grace of Faith? as is clear from *Matthew* 17. 17. and likewise from *John* 14. 1. He is pressing them to believe in Him, and yet he doth commend them to the Father, as most perfect in these things. Thirdly, There is this that we would lastly say of him who is that Noble Object of Faith, look to the eminent depths of Christs condescendency, and then ye will be provoked to love Him. Was it not infinit Love that made Christ to ly three days in the Grave, that we might be through all the ages of Eternity with Him? Was it not Infinit Condescendency that made His precious Head wear a Crown of Thorns, that we might eternally wear a Crown

Crown of Glory? Was it not infinit condescendency that made Christ wear a Purple Robe, that so we might wear that precious Robe of the Righteousness of the Saints? And was it not matchless condescendency, that Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, and like unto us, that so we might become like unto Him, and be made the Righteousness of God in him.

But to come to that which we intend mainly to speak unto at this time, which is that second thing we proposed to speak of from these words: and that is concerning the excellency of this Grace of Faith, which we cleared, was holden out in that, that Faith was called his Commandment, which is so called by way of eminency and excellency. There are many things in Scripture, which may sweetly point out the precious excellency of this Grace of Faith, and we shal only speak to these things.

youthis a good W
I. The first thing that speaketh out the excellency of Faith is this, it exerciseth it self upon a most noble Object (to wit) Jesus Christ: Faith and Love being the two arms of the immortal soul, by which we do embrace a crucified Saviour, which is often pointed at in Scripture; and we shal point at these three principal acts of Faith, which it exerciseth on Jesus Christ as the Object of it.

1. The first is, to make up an Union betwixt Christ and the Believer, (Faith being indeed an uniting Grace, and that which knitteth the members to the head) and to make this more fully appear, we would point out a little what sweet harmony and correspondency there is betwixt these two Sister-graces, (to wit) Faith and Love. Faith is that nail, which fastneth the Soul to Christ, and Love is that Grace which driveth that nail to the head; Faith at first taketh but a tender grip of Christ, and then love cometh in and maketh the Soul take a more sure grip of him.

2. Secondly, Ye may see that harmony in this; Faith is that Grace which taketh hold (as it were)

f the garments of Christ, and of his word; but Love (that ambitious Grace) it taketh hold of the heart of Christ, and, as it were, his heart doth melt in the hand of Love. Thirdly, It may be seen in this, Faith is that Grace, which draweth the first draught of the likeness and image of Christ upon a Soul, but that (accomplishing) Grace of Love, it doth compleat these first draughts, and these imperfect lineaments of Christs Image, which were first drawn on the Soul. Fourthly, by Faith and Love the heart of Christ and of the Believer are so united, that they are no more two, but one Spirit.

2. There is this second Act that Faith exerciseth on Christ, and it is in discovering the matchless excellencies, and the transcendent properties of Jesus Christ. O what large and precious commentaries doth Faith make upon Christ? It is indeed that Faithful Spy, which doth always bring up a good report of him: Hence it is, that Faith is called *understanding*, Col. 2. 2. Because it is that Grace, which revealeth much of the precious Truth of that noble object.

3. And there is this third noble Act of Faith exercising it self upon Christ; *viz.* It maketh Christ precious to the Soul according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Unto you which believe, he is precious.* And if there were no other thing to speak forth its worth, but that, It is more than sufficient: for no doubt this is the exercise of the Higher-House, to be dwelling on the contemplation of Christs beauty, and to have their Souls transported with Love towards him; and with joy in him. Reason and Amazement are seldom companions, but here they do sweetly joyn together; First, a Christian loveth Christ because of Christs Actings; and then he loveth all these actings because they come from Christ.

If. Now secondly, this pointeth out the precious excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace which is most mysterious and sublime in its Actings, it hath a more
divine.

divine and sublime way of acting than any other Grace; Hence it is called, *The Mystery of Faith*, which speaketh this; that the Actings of Faith are Mysteries to the most part of the World, and I shal only point at these things which may speak out the Mystorious Actings of the Grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it self upon a word of promise, although Sense, Reason and Probability, seem to contradict the accomplishment of that Promise: Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of Sense and Reason; but by a higher Rule, (to wit) *The sure word of prophecy*, which is clear from *Rom. 4. 19. Where Abraham believed the promise*, notwithstanding that sense and reason seemed to contradict it: *He considered not the deadness of his own body, neither the barrenness of Sarahs womb, but was strong in the Faith, giving glory to God*: As it is clear from *Heb. 11. 29, 30. Where Faith believed their passing through the red sea, as through dry ground*, which was most contrary to Sense and Reason: *Faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of horns. Which things are most impossible for sense and reason; for sense will oftentimes cry out, All men are liars; And Reason will say, How can such a thing be; And yet that Heroick Grace of Faith cryeth out, Hath he spoken it? He will also do it. Hath he said it? Then it shall come to pass.*

2. Faith can believe a word of promise, notwithstanding that the dispensations of God seem to contradict it; as was clear in *Job*, who professed, *He would trust in God though he should kill him.* And no doubt, but this was the practice of believing *Jacob*, he trusted that that promise should be accomplished, *That the elder should serve the younger*, though all the dispensations of God, (which he did meet with) seemed to say, that promise should not be accomplished.

3. Faith can believe a word of promise, even when the Commands of God seem to contradict the accomplishment of that promise: This is clear in that singular Instance of *Abrahams Faith*, that notwithstanding he

was commanded to kill his promised seed (upon whom did depend the accomplishment of the promises) yet he believed that the promises should be performed. And though there were indeed extraordinary and strange Tryals of his Faith, as he had natural affections to wrestle with; yet over the belly of all these, believing *Abraham*, he giveth Faith to the promise, and bringeth his *Isaac* to the Altar; (though he did receive him back again) this is clear from *Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19.*

4. Faith can exercise it self upon the Promise, notwithstanding that challenges and convictions of unworthiness and guilt to wait on the Christian; That is clear, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* That although *his house was not so with God as did become*, yet he believed the promise. As likewise is clear from *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities do prevail against me:* and yet that doth not interrupt his Faith, but he saith, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away*. And certainly, it were a noble and precious act of Faith to believe, notwithstanding of unanswerable challenges of guilt; the best way both to crucifie our Idols, and to answer these challenges, is believing, and hoping against hope, and closing with Christ: This is most clear from *Isai. 64. 6, 7.* compared with verse 8. where after strange challenges, the Prophet hath a strange word, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.* There is an Emphasis in the word (now) for all this, yet thou art (now) our Father.

5. And lastly, This pointeth out the mysterious acting of the Grace of Faith, that it exerciseth it self upon an invisible object, even upon Christ not yet seen, according to that word, *1 Pet. 5. 8. Whom having not seen yet ye love, in whom though now ye see him not yet believing, &c.* I pose the greater part of you who are here, whether or not these be two of the greatest Paradoxes and Mysteries unto you? For is not this a Mystery to love him whom ye never saw? Whom having not seen, yet ye love: To love an absent and unseen Christ, is a Mystery to the most part of the World: and is not this

this a Mystery to believe on him whom we never saw, *In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing.* And I shal add this, that Faith can hold fast its Interest with God, notwithstanding the most precious Christian should call us hypocrites, & not acknowledge us: this is clear in the practice of *Job*; and most clear from that word, *Isai. 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, This pointeth out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, that Faith, (when it is in exercise) is that Grace by which a Christian doth attain unto most sensible enjoyments. There is a great Question that is much debated among Christians, what is the way to win this happy length, to be always under the sweet and refreshing influence of Heaven, and to have this dew always coming down upon our branches? I can give no answer to it, but this, be much in the exercise of Faith: This is clear upon that notion and name put upon Faith, *Isa. 45. 22.* It is called a look to Christ, which is a most sensible Act. If ye would know a description of Faith, It is this, *The divine contemplation of the immortal soul, upon that divine, excellent and precious object, Jesus Christ.* For God never made Faith a liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jesus Christ manifested in the Gospel: as it is clear, *Ephes. 1. 13. After ye believed ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments these had after their closing with Christ who is invisible.* Our Faith is called a seeing, which speaketh out this, that Faiths sight of God, is as certain as if we did behold him with our eyes, as is clear, *Heb. 11. 27. Moses saw him by Faith who is invisible.* And we conceive that the ground which maketh the most part of us have such complaints, *How long wilt thou forget us for ever?* It is this, the want of the Spiritual exercise of Faith: and are there not some here who may cry out, *It is more*

more than thirty days since I did behold the King; Yea, there are some who may go a greater length, and cry out, *I have lived these two years at Jerusalem, and yet I have not seen the Kings face?* Yea, there are some here whose complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *These three years and six moneths it hath not rained on me*, but the clouds have been restrained and bound up, and the Heavens have become brass. And would you know the rise of these complaints, it is this, ye are not much in the Spiritual exercise of Faith. And to you I would only say these two Words. First, It is easier to perswade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, than to perswade some such, that they are wanting to God in their Faith; for they hold fast that piece of desperate iniquity till they die. Secondly, We would say to these of you who have the valley of *Achor* for a door of hope, and have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, some of you will be less convinced, for the neglect of the duty of Faith, than for the neglect of the duty of Prayer, or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perswaded of this, that if the noble worth of that transcendent object were known, we would have a holy impatience, until once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, This pointeth out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace by which a Christian is advanced to the highest and most inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is, to be the Child of the living God: As is clear, *Joh. 1. 12. To as many as received (or believed in him) he gave power or prerogative to become the sons of God.* And certainly that noble prerogative of Adoption is much undervalued by many: And I will tell you two grounds whereon the most part of men undervalue the excellent Gift of Adoption: First, They do not take up the infinit highness of God (and what a one He is) otherwise they would cry out with David, *Seemeth it a small thing in your eyes to be a son to the King of kings?* Secondly, We do not take

take up, nor understand these matchless Priviledges which are given to them who are once in this estate, I am perswaded, if this were believed, that *be who is a servant doth not abide in the house for ever*, (though he that is a Son doth) it would stir us up to more divine Zeal in our pursuit after Faith.

V. Fifthly, This likewise pointeth out this excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace, by which all other Actions are pleasant to God, and are taken off our hand; as is clear, *Heb. 11, 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*, which must be understood even of all other duties. And that word, *verse 6. Without Faith it is impossible to please God*, speaketh this also, That by Faith we do exceedingly please him. And this is a most sad and lamentable reproof unto many who are here, that their Actions do not please God, because they are not in Faith. Would you know a description of your prayers? (ye who are hypocrites, and destitute of the knowledge of God) it is this, your prayers are the breach of the third Command, *In taking the Name of the Lord in vain, for which he will not hold you guiltless*. And would ye know what is your hearing of Sermons? *It is an abomination to the Lord*, according to that word in *Tit. 1. 15. To the unbelieving and impure, nothing is clean*. And as Solomon doth speak, *The plowing of the wicked is sin*: So that all your actions that ye go about, are but an offence to the Majesty of the Lord.

Now we would speak to these two things before we proceed to the evidences of Faith: (to wit) First, That there is a difference betwixt the direct Act of Faith, and the reflecting Act of Faith, For there may be a direct Act of Faith in a Christian, when he is not perswaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting Acts of Faith are these, which a Christian hath, when he is perswaded in his Conscience, that he doth believe. And we would secondly say, That there are many that go down to their Grave under that Soul-destroying delusion that they are

are in the Faith, and yet never did know what Faith is: I am perswaded, there are many whom all the preachings in the World did never perswade, that they did never believe, their Faith being born with them, and it will die with them, without any Fruit. But Faith being such an excellent Grace, and so advantageous, (whereof we have spoken a few things) we shal speak a little further of it. First, In pointing out some evidences, by which a Christian may know, whether or not he be indeed in the Faith. Secondly, I shal give you some helps whereby Faith may be kepted in exercise.

1. Now there is this first evidence of Faith, that a Christian who doth believe, he accounteth absence and want of fellowship with Christ, and communion with him, one of the greatest and most lamentable Crosses that ever we had; as is clear, *Psalm 13. 3. Lighten mine eyes*, saith David, that is, *Let me behold, and be satisfied with thy face*, and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *Lest I sleep the sleep of death*. David thought himself a dead man, if Christ did withdraw his presence from him. Also it is clear, *Cant. 3. 1.* (compared with the following verses) where absence from Christ, and want of communion with him, was the greatest Cross that the Spouse had: and it is clear from *John 20. 11, 12, 13.* Where *Mary* had a holy disdain of all things in respect and comparison of Christ. But I will tell you what a Hypocrite doth most lament, and that is the want of Reputation among the Saints: That is the great god, and idol among Hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) Hypocrites and Atheists lament most, the World, and the lust of their Eyes when they want these, then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think Heaven can never make up the loss of Earth. And certainly, if many of us would examine our selves by this, we would find our selves most defective. I would pose all you who are here, who have taken on a name to be

be followers of Christ, whether or not ye have been content to walk thirty days in absence from Christ, and yet never to lament it? Hath not Christ been thirty days and more in Heaven, without a visit from you? and yet for all this, ye have not cloathed your selves with Sackcloth. I will not say, that this is an undeniable evidence of the total want of the grace of Faith, but it doth evidently prove this, That the person who hath come this length, hath lost much of his primitive Love, and much of that high esteem which he ought to have of matchless Christ: What can you find in this World, that maketh you converse so little with Heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Christian, when he is going down to his Grave, that he hath this wherewith to comfort himself, *I am to change my place, but not my company*: death to the believing Christian being a blessed transition and transportation to a more immediat and constant and uninterrupted enjoyment of God. But I believe, That all who have the Name of Believers in this generation, should go to Heaven, they might have this to say, I am now not only to change my place, but also my company; for these seventy years I have been conversant with my Idols, but now I am to converse with more blessed, divine, and excellent company. O that ye would be perswaded to pursue much after an absent Christ. Were it not a sweet period of our life, to breath out our last breath in his arms, and to be living in the Faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

I I. There is this second evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavour to advance that necessary work of the mortification of their Idols, according to that Word, *1 John 3. 4. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure, Acts 15. 9. Faith it purifieth the heart.* And concerning this evidence (lest any should mistake it) I would say these things to you. First, The mortification of a Christian,

Christian, as long as he is here below, it doth more consist in resolutions than attainments. It is certain that there are high attainments of a Christian, in the mortification of his Idols, but his resolutions go far above his performances. Secondly, We will say this, That those Christians who never came this length in Christianity, to make that an universal conclusion, and full resolution, *What have I to do any more with idols?* They may suspect themselves, that they are not in the Faith: For a Christian that is in Christ, he is universal in resolutions, though he be not so in practice, but defective in performance: A Christian may have big Resolutions with weak performances; for Resolution will be at the Gate of Heaven, before Practice come from the borders of Hell; there being a long distance betwixt Resolution and Practice; and the one much swifter than the other. And thirdly, We would likewise say, That ye who never did know what it was to endeavour (by Prayer and the exercise of other Duties,) the Mortification of your Lusts and Idols; ye may be afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of seeing him as he is. And I would say this to many, who are settled upon their lies, and who never did know what it was to spend one hour in secret prayer for mortifying of an Idol, that they would beware lest that curse be past in Heaven against them; *I would have purged you, and ye would not be purged, therefore ye shall not be purged any more till you die*; That iniquity of refusing to commune with Christ in the work of secret Mortification, I say, that *iniquity shall not be purged away*. And we would once seriously desire you, by that dreadful Sentence that Christ shall pass against you, and by the love ye have to your immortal Souls, and by the pains of these everlasting torments of Hell, that ye would seriously set about the work of Spiritual Mortification; that so ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the Soul-comforting hope of eternal life. I would only
speak

Speak this one word to you, (and desire you seriously to ponder it,) What if within twelve hours hereafter a Summonds were given you (without continuation of days) to compear before the solemn and dreadful Tribunal of that Impartial Judge, Jesus Christ: What suppose ye, would be your thoughts? Will ye examine your own Conscience, what think ye would be your thoughts, if such Summonds were given unto you, I am perswaded of this, *That your knees would smite one against another, and your face should gather paleness, seing your Conscience would condemn you, That ye had been weighted in the balance, and found light:* O think ye that ye can both fight and triumph in one day? Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one day? Think ye your Lusts and unmortified Corruptions so weak and faint-hearted an enemy, that upon the first appearance of such imaginary Champions (as most part of us are in our own eyes) that your Idols would lay down Arms and let you trample on them? Believe me, Mortification is not a work of one day, or one year, but it is a work will serve you all your time, begin as soon as you will: And therefore seing you have spent your days in the Works of the Flesh, it is time that now ye would begin and pursue after Him, whose work is within Him, and whose reward shal come before Him.

III. Now there is this third evidence, by which a Christian may know whether he be in the Faith or not, and it is, that Christ is matchless and incomparable, unto such an one, according to that word, *1 Pet. 2. 7. To you that believe Christ is precious, and that Word that Luke hath in his 7. Chapter, at the close, That she to whom much was forgiven, loved much:* Now lest this likewise should prove a discouragement to any, I would only have you taking notice of this, that a Christian may be a believer, and yet want the sensible discoveries of this, that Christ is matchlessly precious to him: but this is certain, that they which
are

The Mystery of Faith

in the lively exercise of Faith, it is impossible for them not to esteem Christ matchless. And I would speak this likewise to many who are here; Have you not been living these ten years in Faith, And I would pose you with this, esteem you not your Idols more matchless than Christ, and more of worth than He? It is impossible that there can be any lively exercise of Faith, and not esteem Christ matchless. It is not to say with your mouth, and contradict it with your heart, will do the business: For if your hearts could speak, it would say, I would sell Christ *for thirty pieces of silver*: But my Idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the World and its Pleasures, better nor the Eternity of Joy? Oh, know ye not that Word (O ye desperately ignorant of the Truths of God,) *That he who loveth the World, the love of the Father is not in him*; And yet notwithstanding of the Light of the Word, ye would sell your immortal souls (with Esau) *For a mess of Pottage*: O but it is a poor bargain when ye have sold the eternity of joy for a passing World, and for its transitory delights? I would earnestly know what shal be your thoughts in that day, when ye shal be standing upon the utmost line betwixt Time and Eternity. O what will be your thoughts at that day? but you are to follow on to an endless Pain, (by appearance) and then you are to leave your Idols. I shal only desire, that ye may read the Word, *Isa. 10. 3. What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?* Ye shal then preach Mortification to the life, though all the time of Mortification shal then be cut off. O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face, (preach out concerning the vanity of this World) might it not perswade you that the World is a fancy and a dream that shal flee away, and shal leave you in the day of your greatest strait.

IV. And

IV. And there is this fourth evidence of Faith, That a Christian, who doth truly believe, he is that Christian who entertaineth a divine jealousy and a holy suspicion of himself, whether or no he doth believe; I love not that Faith which is void of fear, this was clear in the practice of believing *Noah*, that though by Faith he built the Ark, yet he had fear mixed with his Faith. I know that there are some who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly shall get Heaven; for I think an Hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal Salvation; however, I think the exercise of a Hypocrite under his doubtings, it is more the exercise of his judgments, than the exercise of his Conscience: And I may say, That if all the exercise of the Law, which is preached in these days, were narrowly searched, it would be more the exercise of Light than the exercise of Conscience. We speak these things as our doubt, which never was our exercise, and we make these things our publick exercise, which was never our privat Chamber-exercise. And I think that if all that a Christian did speak to God in prayer, were his exercise, he would speak less and wonder more. We would be speechless when we go to God; for often if we did speak nothing but our exercise, we would have nothing to say. And certainly it is true, that we often fall into that woful sin, *Of despairing lying against the Holy Ghost*, by flattering God with our Mouth, and lying unto him with our Tongue. And I shall only say these two words, There are some who have this for their great design, *viz.* they would be at peace with their Conscience, and also they would be at peace with their Idols, they would gladly reconcile Conscience and their Idols together, that is their great design. And there are some whose design is a little more refined, they study rather to be reconciled with their Conscience, than

are in the lively exercise of Faith, it is impossible then for them not to esteem Christ matchless. And I would speak this likewise to many who are here; Have you not been living these ten years in Faith, And I would pose you with this, esteem you not your Idols more matchless than Christ, and more of worth than He? It is impossible that there can be any lively exercise of Faith, and not esteem Christ matchless. It is not to say with your mouth, and contradict it with your heart, will do the business: For if your hearts could speak, it would say, I would sell Christ *for thirty pieces of silver*: But my Idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the World and its Pleasures, better nor the Eternity of Joy? Oh, know ye not that Word (O ye desperately ignorant of the Truths of God,) *That he who loveth the World, the love of the Father is not in him*; And yet notwithstanding of the Light of the Word, ye would sell your immortal souls (with *Esau*) *For a mess of Pottage*: O but it is a poor bargain when ye have sold the eternity of joy for a passing World, and for its transitory delights? I would earnestly know what shal be your thoughts in that day, when ye shal be standing upon the utmost line betwixt Time and Eternity. O what will be your thoughts at that day? but you are to follow on to an endless Pain, (by appearance) and then you are to leave your Idols. I shal only desire, that ye may read the Word, *Isa. 10. 3. What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?* Ye shal then preach Mortification to the life, though all the time of Mortification shal then be cut off. O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face, (preach out concerning the vanity of this World) might it not perswade you that the World is a fancy and a dream that shal flee away, and shal leave you in the day of your greatest strait.

IV. And

IV. And there is this fourth evidence of Faith, That a Christian, who doth truly believe, he is that Christian who entertaineth a divine jealousy and a holy suspicion of himself, whether or no he doth believe; I love not that Faith which is void of fear, this was clear in the practice of believing *Noah*, that though by Faith he built the Ark, yet he had fear mixed with his Faith. I know that there are some who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly shal get Heaven; for I think an Hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal Salvation; however, I think the exercise of a Hypocrite under his doubtings, it is more the exercise of his judgments, than the exercise of his Conscience: And I may say, That if all the exercise of the Law, which is preached in these days, were narrowly searched, it would be more the exercise of Light than the exercise of Conscience. We speak these things as our doubt, which never was our exercise, and we make these things our publick exercise, which was never our privat Chamber-exercise. And I think that if all that a Christian did speak to God in prayer, were his exercise, he would speak less and wonder more. We would be speechless when we go to God; for often if we did speak nothing but our exercise, we would have nothing to say. And certainly it is true, that we often fall into that woful sin, *Of desperat lying against the Holy Ghost*, by flattering God with our Mouth, and lying unto him with our Tongue. And I shal only say these two words, There are some who have this for their great design, *viz.* they would be at peace with their Conscience, and also they would be at peace with their Idols, they would gladly reconcile Conscience and their Idols together, that is their great design. And there are some whose design is a little more refined, they study rather to be reconciled with their Conscience, than

then to be reconciled with God; Their great aim they shoot at, is this, to get their Conscience quieted, though they know not what it is, to have the Soul comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now, there is this last evidence of Faith, That justifying Faith is a Faith which putteth the Christian to be much in the exercise of these duties, by which it may be maintained; for we must keep Faith as *the apple of our eye*: And for that end, I would only give you these three things, by which Faith must be kept in exercise; and a real Christian will be endeavouring in some measure to attain unto these.

I. It keepeth Faith much in exercise, to be much in marking and taking notice of the divine exercise and proofs of the Love of God, wherewith a Christian doth meet, as is clear from that word, *Rom. 5. 4. Experience worketh hope*. I durst be bold to charge the most part that are indeed in Christ with this, that they are too little in remarking and taking notice of the experience of his Love. Ye should mark the place of your experience it self: as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Christians did meet with experience, in such an enjoyment of God, they marked it, *Ezek. 1. 1. By the river of Chebar the heavens were opened, and I saw the vision of God*. And *Gen. 32. 30. Jacob called the place peniel, the place of living, after seeing the face of God: it was so remarkable unto him*. And we conceive, that ye would mark these two things mainly in your practice. First, Ye would mark (if ye can possible) the first day of your closing with Christ, and of your coming out of Egypt: and we may allude unto the command (if not more than allude unto it,) *Deut. 26. 1. Observe the moneth of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: For in the moneth of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of the land of Egypt*. And secondly, We would have you much in marking these experiences which have increased your Faith, and which have strengthened

ned your Love, and which have made you mortifie your Idols; These are experiences especially to be marked.

2. Faith is kepted in exercise, and we win to the lively assurance of our interest in God: which we would press upon you, by being much in the exercise of secret prayer. O but many loveth much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone. And this is a desperat sign of hypocrisie, according to that, *Mat. 6. 5.* It is said of Hypocrites, *They love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men:* But it is never said of these persons, that they love to pray alone, only they loved to pray in the Synagogues, but it is secret, and retired prayer, by which Faith must be kepted in exercise.

3. And there is this likewise that we would press upon you, that ye would be much in studying communion and fellowship with God, so that your Faith may be kepted in life. And O what a blessed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of mount *Pisgah*, and there to behold that promised land, to get a refreshing sight of the Crown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all along that day? The heart of a CHRISTIAN ought to be in HEAVEN, His conversation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there. And I know not what of a Christian ought to be out of Heaven, even before his going there) save his lumpish tabernacle of Clay, which cannot inherit incorruption, till he be made incorruptible. But I shal say no more but this, many of us are readier to betray him with a kiss, and crucifie him afresh, than to keep communion with him: But *we eternally be to him by whom the Son of man is betrayed, and that doth crucifie Christ afresh; it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea.* I remember an expression of a man, not two days ago, who (upon his death-bed) being asked of one what he

was

was doing; did most stupidly though most truly reply, *That he was fighting with Christ*; and I think that the most part of us (if he prevent us not) shal die *fighting with Christ*. But know, and be perswaded, that he is too sore a party for us to fight with, *He will once tread upon you in the wine-press of his fury, and we shall return with dyed garments from treading such of you as would not imbrace him*; He shall destroy you with all his heart. Therefore be instructed, lest His Soul be disjoyned from you (as that word in *Jer. 6. 8. And lest your souls be eternally separated from him*; Be I say, instructed to close with him by Faith. Now to him who can make you to do so, we desire to give praise.

In the two Sermons next following, you have the rest of these sweet Purposes, which the worthy Author preached upon the same Text.

S E R M O N V.

1 John 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

THere are two great Rocks upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way and motion toward his rest, 1. The Rock of presumption and carnal Confidence; so that when Christ dandleth them upon his knees, and satisfieth them with the Breasts of His Consolations, and maketh their Cup to overflow, then they cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved.* And 2. The Rock of misbelief and discouragement; So that, When he hideth his Face, and turneth back the Face of his Throne, then they cry out, *Our hope and our strength is perished from the Lord,* we know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by Humility, nor our crosses by patience and Submission, O but misbelief and jealousy are bad interpreters of dark dispensations, they know not what it is to read these
Mysterious

Mysterious Characters of divine Providence, except they be written in the legible Characters of Senses, misbelief is big with Child of Twins, and is travailing, till it bring forth Apostacy and Security, and no doubt he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that woful Idol of misbelief, and doth walk by that Royal Law of the Word, and not by that changeable Rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great Idols and Dragons of a Christian, that hindereth him from putting a blank in Christs hand concerning his guiding to Heaven, there is Pride, Self Indulgence and Security. Do we not covet to be more excellent than our Neighbour? Do we not love to travel to Heaven through a valley of Riches? And do we not ambitiously desire to walk toward Sion sleeping (rather than weeping) *as we go*? Are there not some words that we would have taken out of the Bible? That is sad Divinity to flesh and blood, *Through many tribulations must we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: we love not to be *changed from vessel to vessel, that so our scent may be taken from us*.

There are three great enemies of Christ: Misbelief, Hypocrisie, and Prophanity: Misbelief is a bloody sin, Hypocrisie is a silent sin, Prophanity is a crying sin. These are mother evils, and I shal give you these differences betwixt them: Misbelief crucifieth Christ under the vail of humility, Hypocrisie crucifieth Christ under the vail of Love; and Prophanity putteth him to open shame. Misbelief denyeth the Love and Power of God, Hypocrisie denyeth the Omniscieney of God, and Prophanity denyeth the Justice of God. Misbelief is a sin that looketh after inherent Righteousness, Hypocrisie is a sin that looketh after external holiness only, and Prophanity is a sin that looketh after Heaven without holiness: making connexion between these things that God hath always separat, and separating these things which he hath always put together: so that their Faith shal once prove a delusion, and fly away as a dream in the night, but let us study this

D

excellent

excellent Grace of true and saving Faith, which shall be a precious remedy against all those Christ-destroying and Soul-destroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did purpose thirdly to be spoken of from the words, which was the sweetness of this grace of Faith; no doubt, it is a pleasant command, and it maketh all commands pleasant, it is that which casteth a divine lustre upon the most hard sayings of Christ, and maketh the Christian to cry forth, *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce.* We need not stand long to clear that Faith is a sweet and refreshing command; for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this grace; and unspeakable joy and heavenly delight are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shall speak to these things. The first is, That this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, maketh him to behold not only the beauty of his actions, but the beauty of his person: and there are these three precious sights that Faith giveth to a Christian of Christ: First, It letteth the Christian see Christ in his absolute and personal excellency, taking him up as the eternal Son of God, as the Ancient of days, as the Father of Eternity, as *the express Image of His Fathers person, and the brightness of his glory*, and this filleth the soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, *Heb. 11. 27. That we see by Faith him that is invisible.* As if he had said, Faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. Secondly, It letteth the Soul see Christ in his relative excellencies, that is, what he is to us; Faith taketh up Christ as a Husband, and from thence we are provoked to much boldness and divine confidence, and withal, to see these rich possessions that are provided for us by our elder Brother, who was *born for adversity*; Faith taketh up Christ as a blessed *Days-man that did lay his hand upon us both*: And from thence is constrained to

to wonder at the condescendency of Christ, it taketh him up as dying, and as redeeming us from the power of the grave, and from the hands of our enemies; and this provocketh Christians to make a total and absolute resignation of themselves over unto Christ, *To serve him all the days of our life, in righteousness and holiness.* And thirdly, Faith maketh the soul to behold these mysterious draughts of spotless love, those divine emanations of Love that have flowed from his ancient and everlasting Love since the World began. Would you know the great ground why we are so ignorant of him, who is the study of Angels, and of all that are about the Throne? It is this, we are not much in the exercise of Faith. And if we would ask that question, What is the way to attain to the saving knowledge of God in Christ? We could give no answer to it but this, Believe, and again believe, and again believe: Faith openeth these mysterious Seals of his boundless perfection, and in some way teacheth the Christian to answer that unanswerable question, *What is his Name, and what is his sons Name?*

There is this secondly that pointeth out the sweetness of Faith, that it giveth an excellent relish unto the Promises, and maketh them Food to our Soul. What are all the Promises without Faith (as to our use) but as a dead letter that hath no life; but Faith exercised upon the Promises, maketh a Christian cry out *The words of his mouth are sweeter unto me than the honey and the honey comb;* as is clear from *Heb. 11. 12, 13.* It is by Faith that we imbrace the Promises, and do receive them.

Thirdly, The sweetness of Faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Christian to rejoyce under the most anxious and afflicting dispensations that he meeteth with while he is here below; as is clear from *Rom. 5. 1, 5.* where his being justified by Faith, hath this fruit attending it, *to joy in tribulation;* And likewise from *Heb. 10. 34, 35.* Doth not Faith hold the

Crown in his right hand, and letteth a Christian behold their infinit Dignities that are provided unto them after they have, *as a strong man run their race?* And when a Christian is put in *o a furnace hot seven times more than ordinary*, it bringeth down the Son of Man Jesus Christ, to *walk with them in the furnace*; So that they walk safely, and with joy through fire and water (and in a manner) they can have no Cross in his company. For would ye know what is the description of a Cross? It is to want Christ in any estate. And would ye know what is the description of prosperity? It is to have Christ in any condition or estate of life; What can ye want that have him? and what can ye have that want him? He is that All; so that all things besides him are but vanity. But besides this, Faith doth discover unto a Christian, that there is a sweet period of all his tryals and afflictions that he can be exposed unto; so that he can never say that of Faith, which *Ahab* spake of *Micajah*, *He never prophesieth good things to me*, But rather he may say always the contrary, Faith never prophesieth evil unto me, it being a Grace that prophesieth excellent things in the darkest night, and sweetly declareth, that though *weeping do endure for the evening*, yet *joy cometh in the morning*; And that, though now they go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, yet at last they shall return rejoicing, bearing sheaves in their bosom.

And this may bring in the fourth consideration to point out the sweetness of Faith, That it giveth a Christian a refreshing sight of that land that is afar off, and maketh him to behold that inheritance that is provided for the *Saints in light*; it goeth forth to the *Brook Eschol*, and there doth pluck down those grapes that grow in *Emmanuel's Land*, to bring up a good report upon that noble Countrey, we are sojourning towards, and the City, the Streets whereof are paved with transparant Gold. And howbeit it may be a perplexing debate between many and their own souls, whether

whether or not these eyes that have been the windows through which so much uncleanness have entered, and these species of Lust have been conveyed into the heart, shal once be like the eyes of a dove washed with milk and fitly set; and be admitted to see that glorious Object, *The Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne*: Or where ever these tongues that have been set on fire of hell; and these polluted lips that have spoke so much against God, and Heaven, and all his people, and interests, shal ever be admitted to sing these heavenly *Hallelujahs* amongst that spotless queer of Angels, and that *Assembly of the first born*; or if these hands or feet that have been so active to commit iniquity, and so swift to run after vanity, shal ever be admitted hereafter to carry these *Palm Branches*, and to follow the *Lamb wherever he goeth*; and whether ever these hearts that have been indeed a *Bethaven, a house of Idols*, may yet notwithstanding, be a dwelling for the Holy Ghost. Though these things (we say) and such like may be the subject of many sad debates to some weary souls, and cause many tossings to and fro till the morning: yet Faith can bring all these Mysteries to light, and looking within the veil, can let us see thousands of thousands, who were once as ugly as our selves, yet now having washed their robes, and made them white in the Bloud of the Lamb, are admitted to stand before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night.

Now there is that Fourthly; which we promised to speak of concerning this Grace of Faith from these words, and it is the absolute necessity that is of the exercise of this Grace which is holden forth in that word *his Commandment*; which doth import these three things; 1. That all the Commands that we can obey without this Commandment of Faith, it is but a polluting of our selves in the Ditch till our own cloaths abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exercise of that Grace of Faith, than in the exercise of any other. And lastly, That as to the many

imperfections which we have in our obedience, there is a sweet act of Oblivion past of them all; if we make conscience seriously to obey this command of Faith, which is indeed, the sweet compend of the Gospel, all these things do most clearly appear, in that believing here is called, *His Commandment*, by way of excellency, as if this were his only Commandment.

But that we may yet a little more particularly point out the absolute necessity of Faith, there are these things that speaketh it forth to the full, 1. That though rivers of tears should run down our eyes, because we keep not his Law, though we should never rise off our knees from prayer, and should all our life time speak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we should constantly obey his Commands, yet without Faith we should never escape that eternal sentence of excommunication from the presence of the Lord; there being no action that doth proceed from us which can please the Majesty of the Lord, unless it hath its rise from this principle of Faith; as is clear from *Heb. 11. 6. Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* And though we should offer unto him ten thousand rivers of Oyl, and thousands of rams, and should offer up in a burnt Sacrifice all the beasts that are upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon many hills, this should be the answer that God should return unto us, *Who hath required these things at your hands, I take no pleasure in these solemn sacrifices;* Because there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exercise of Faith, making use of the spotless Righteousness of Christ. 2. Let us do our utmost, by all the inventions we can, to bring down our body, and let us separate our selves from all the pleasures of the flesh; yet all our Idols shall reign without much contradiction, except once we do attain unto this Grace of Faith, which is that victory, whereby we must overcome the world, and the hand that maketh use of infinite strength for subduing of corruption, making the Christian

istian sweetly to take up that Song, *Stranger is he that is with us, than he that is in the world.*

From all this that we have said, both of the sweetness of Faith, and the necessity thereof, we would propose these few considerations, or two or three sorts of persons. 1. There are some who live in that vain imaginary delusion of attaining Heaven through a Covenant of Works, and do neglect to seek salvation by Faith, in the Righteousness of Christ. And to those who build upon this sandy foundation, I shal say but these two words. First, How long shal you labour in the fire of any vanity? Do you ever think to put on the Cape-stone? know ye not that the day is approaching, when your Houses shal fall about your ears, your confidence shal be rejected, and your hope shall *evanish as a dream, and flee away as a vision of the night?* Secondly, What a monstrous blindness, and what an unspeakable act of folly must it be, to say, that Christ was crucified in vain? which yet ye do practically assert, when ye go about to purchase a Righteousness through the Works of the Law.

2. There are some who are secure in their own thoughts concerning their Faith: they never questioned the reality of it, they never examined it. O! ye whose Faith is cold as your selves, ye say ye never knew what it was to dispute, and I may say ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou prophane Hypocrite, let me tell thee, a strong Faith, and yet strong Idols, must needs be a strong delusion, Thou wilt not obey the Lord, thou wilt not Pray, thou wilt not believe a Threatning in all the Word, thou wilt count all Religion Madness and Foolishness, and yet thou wilt perswade thy self thou believest in Christ. *O be not deceived, God is not mocked;* and why will ye mock your selves? Shal I tell you that Reprobates have a sad Religion, one day they must Believe, and Obey, and Pray, and give Testimony to Godliness, but alas; too late, and little to their advantage. Shal not

he whom all the Ministers on earth could scarcely ever perswade to believe so much as a Heaven or Hell, or one Threatning in all the Book of God, at last be forced to believe their own sense, when they shal see the Ancient of Days upon the Throne, and shal hear the cryes of so many thousands living witnessses come out both from Heaven and Hell, bearing Testimony to the Truth of Threatnings and Promises? that not one jot of them is fallen to the ground. And he who would never be perswaded to bow a knee to God in earnest all his life, shal he not then pray with greatest fervency, *that hills and mountains might fall upon him & to cover him from the face of the Lamb*; And he that would never submit to a command of God, must he not at last obey that dreadful command, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting torment, &c.* Yea, he who was the greatest mocker in the world, shal then confess, that they are blest, who put their trust in the Lord, as they are excellently brought in, though in Apocriphal Book, *Wisdom c. 5. 4.* Crying out with great Terreur, while they behold that unexpected sight of the glorious condition of the Godly. O here are the men, say they, whom we mocked, whose life we accounted madness, and their end dishonourable: Be wise therefore in time, and do that willingly, which ye must do by constraint, and do that with sweetness and advantage, that ye must do at length with loss and sorrow.

Thirdly, There are some who certainly have some hope of eternal life, but contenteth themselves with a small measure of assurance, and these I would beseech, that ye would be more endeavouring to make your calling and election sure, and would be endeavouring to see your names written in the Ancient Records of Heaven: And this we shal press upon you by several Arguments. 1. Those strong and subtile, and soul destroying delusions that are amongst many, who conceive they do believe, (as we were saying) and *are pure in their own eyes, who are not yet purged from their*

their iniquities. O! are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that suppose *we are eating, but when we awake our soul is empty*, whose faith is a metaphysick notion, that hath no foundation, but mens apprehension; and this shal never bear us through the gates of death, nor convey us in into eternity of joy. 2. May not this press you to follow after assurance, that is a compendious way to sweeten all your Crosses: as is clear from *Heb. 3. 17, 18.* Where the convictions of this made *Habbakuk* to rejoyce in the God of his salvation; *Though the fig-tree did not bear fruit, and the labour of the olive did fail, and there were no sweetness to be found in the vine,* and from *Heb. 10. 34.* Where they took joyfully the spoiling of their good; *knowing within themselves, that they had a better and an enduring substance.* This is indeed that Tree which if we cast into the waters of *Marah*, they will presently become sweet, for it is not below the child of hope to be much anxious about these things that he meets with here, when he sincerely knoweth that Commandment shal come forth, *Lift up your head, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near*, even the day when all the rivers of this sorrow shal sweetly run into the Ocean of everlasting delights. 3. A Christian that is much in assurance, he is much in communion and fellowship with God, as is clear from the *Song 1. 13, 14.* and *Song 2. 3.* Where when once she cometh to that, to be perswaded that Christ was her beloved, then she sat down under his shadow, and his fruit was pleasant unto her taste: for the assured Christian doth taste of these crumbs that fall from that higher Table, and no doubt, these that have tasted of that old wine will not straight way desire the new, because the old is better. And then 4. It is the way to keep you from Apostacy, and making defection from God: Faith is that grace which will make you continue with Christ in all his temptation, as is clear from *2 Pet. 1. 10.* Where this is set down as a fruit of making our calling and election sure, that

if we do these things we shal never fall; Faith makes a Christian to live a dependent life; for would you know the motto of a Christian? It is this, *Self diffidence* and *Christ-dependence*, as is clear from that word, in the Song 8. 5 *That while we are walking through this wilderness, we are leaning upon our well beloved.* 5. This assurance will help a Christian to overcome many Temptations. There are four sorts of Temptations that assault the Christian: There are Temptations of desire, temptations of love, temptations of hope, and temptations of anxiety, all which a Christian through this noble grace of assurance may sweetly overcome; he that hath once made Christ his own, what can he desire but him? As *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord:* What can he love more than Christ, or love beside Christ, all his love being drowned, (as it were) in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him. And as to hope: will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make a Christian content to bear the indignation of the Lord, and patiently submit unto the Cross, since there is a sweet connexion betwixt His Cross, and His Crown, *Rom. 8. 35, 36. If he suffer with him, he shall also reign with him.* And lastly, there is this Argument to press you to assurance, that it sweetneth the thoughts of Death; it maketh Death unto a Christian, not the King of Terroures, but the King of Desires: and it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh Death refreshing unto a Christian. 1. He knoweth that it is the Funeral of all his miseries, and the Birth-day of all his blessings and Eternal Enjoyments. This is the Coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shal have that Marriage betwixt Christ and him sweetly solemnized; And that when he is to step that last step, he knoweth that Death will make him change his Place, but not his Company; And O that we could
once

once win unto this, to Seal that Conclusion without presumption, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* We might without presumption, sing one of the Songs of Sion, even while we are in this strange Land, and taking Christ in our Armes, might sweetly cry forth, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Comfort your selves in this, that all your Clouds shal once pass away, and that that Truth shal once come to pass which was confirmed by the Oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards Heaven, *That time shall be no more.* Time shal once sweetly die out in Eternity, and ye may be looking after new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. O long to be with him, for Christ longeth to have you with him.

S E R M O N VI.

I Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are three most precious and Cardinal Graces, which a Christian ought mainly to pursue: There is that exalting Grace of Faith, that Comforting Grace of Hope, and that Aspiring Grace of Love: And if once a Christian did take up that heavenly difference that is betwixt these Sister graces, he might be provoked to move after them most swiftly, as the Chariots of *Amminadab*: And there is this difference between these Graces; Faith is a sober and silent Grace: Hope is a patient and submissive Grace: Love is an ambitious and impatient Grace. Faith cryeth out, *O! my soul? be silent unto God.* Hope cryeth out, *I will wait patiently for the Lord, Until the vision shall speak.* But love it cryeth out, *How long art thou a coming?* And it is waiting to hear the sound of his Feet coming over the mountains of separation. That is the

the Motto of Hope, *Quod desertur, non aufertur*; that which is delayed, saith Hope, is not altogether taken away, and made void: And that may be the Divine Emblem of the Grace of Love; It is sight, infolding Desire in his Arms, and it is Desire cloathed with Wings, treading upon Delay and Impediments. There is this second difference between these Graces; the Grace of Faith, it imbraceth the Truth of the Promises: the Grace of Hope, it imbraceth the goodness of the thing that is promised; but that exalting Grace of Love, it imbraceth the *Promises*: Faith cryeth out, *Hath he spoken it, he will also do it*: Hope cryeth out, *Good is the word of the Lord, be it unto thy Servant according to thy Promise*: And Love, it cryeth with an higher Note, *As is the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my well beloved amongst the sons*. Thirdly, There is that difference between these Graces, Faith, it overcometh Temptations; Hope, it overcometh difficulties, and Love stayeth at home, and divideth the spoil: There is a sweet correspondence between those Graces in this; Faith, it fighteth and conquereth; and Hope it fighteth and conquereth; but Love, it doth enjoy the Trophies of the victory. And, Fourthly, there is this difference, the noble Grace of Faith it shal once vanish into sight; That noble grace of Hope, it shal once vanish into possession and enjoyment; But that constant Grace of Love, it shal be the eternal companion of a Christian, and shal walk in with him into the Streets of the *New Jerusalem*. And I would ask you that question, What a day shal it be, when Faith shal cede to sight? what a day shal it be when Hope shal yield its place to Love, and Love and Sight shal eternally sit down, and solace themselves in these blessed Mysteries, these everlasting consolations of Heaven, world without end. And Fifthly, There is this difference, less will satisfie the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Hope, than will satisfie the Grace of Love; Faith

Faith will be content with the Promise, and Hope will be content with the thing that is promised, but that ambitious Grace of Love, it will be only content with the Promiser; Love claspeth his arms about that precious and noble Object Jesus Christ. Love is a suspicious Grace. It oftentimes cryeth forth, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; So that Faith is oftentimes put to resolve suspicions of Love. I can compare these Three Graces to nothing so fitly, as to those three great Worthies that *David* had, These three Graces, they will break thorow all difficulties, were it an host of Philistines, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of the Well of *Bethlehem*, the Well of everlasting consolation that floweth from beneath the Throne of God: Love is like *Noah's* dove, it never findeth rest for the sole of its foot, until once it be within the Ark, that place of repose Jesus Christ.

And sixthly, There is this last difference between them, Faith taketh hold upon the faithfulness of Christ; Hope taketh hold upon the goodness of Christ: but Love, it taketh hold upon the heart of Christ. And think ye not it must be a pleasant and soul-refreshing exercise, to be continually taken up in imbracing him, that is that eternal admiration of Angels. Must it not be an excellent life, and dayly to be feeding on the *finest of the wheat*, and to be satisfied with *honey out of the rock*. O but heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant land, might not we be constrained to bring up a good report of it.

But now to come to that which I purposed mainly to speak to at this time. The last thing concerning Faith, that we proposed from the words, was the object upon which Faith exerciseth it self, which is here set down to be *the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*. And that we may speak to this more clearly, we shal first speak a little to the negative, what things are not the fit

fit object of Faith, and then to the positive, shewing how this Name of God, and of His Son Christ, is that sure ground upon which a Christian may pitch his Faith: For the first, ye must know that a Christian is not to build his Faith upon sense, not sensible enjoyments. Some may be an evidence of Faith, but it must not be the foundation of Faith: I know there are some that oftentimes cry out, *Except I put my fingers into the Print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe*: and indeed it is a mystery unto the most part of us, to be exercising Faith upon a naked word of promise, abstracting from sense; to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two greatest mysteries of Christianity. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear, 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of Love, and as it were, hath its fits of Faith; Sometimes sense is sick of love, and sometime sense is strong in Faith, but ere six hours go about, sense may be sick of jealousy, and sick of unbelief, as you will see from *Psal. 30. 6, 7*. Sense, that bold thing, it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong; I will never be moved*; but behold how soon it changeth its note, *Thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled*. At one time it will cry forth, *who is like unto him that pardoneth iniquity, and that passeth over transgressions*; but ere many hours go about, I will sing a song upon another Key, and cry out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon sense, it wanteth the promise of blessedness, for this is annexed to believing, that is founded upon the Word, according to that in *John 20. 29*. *Blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed*. Nor hath that Faith that is built upon sense, such a solid joy waiting on it, as Faith that is built upon the naked word of Promise, as may be cleared from that word,

word, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. where Faith exerciseth it self upon Christ not seen, maketh a Christian *to rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, a joy that doth not attend believing, founded upon sense. 3. That Faith that is built upon sense, it giveth not much glory to God, for Faith that is built upon sense, it exalteth not the Faithfulness of God, it exalteth not the Omnipotency of God. I will tell you what is the Divinity of sense; let me see, and then I will believe; but it knoweth not what it is to believe upon Trust, and because *the Lord hath spoken in his holiness*, and in effect, Faith that is built upon Sense, is no Faith, even us. *Rom.* 8. *Hope that is seen, is no hope*; And therefore, when the Lord seeth a Christian making Sense an Idol, that he will not believe, but when he seeth and feeleth, this doth often provock the Majesty of the Lord to withdraw himself from that Christian, and to deny him that sweet influence of Heaven, and those consolations that are above, so that in an instant he hath both his Sense, and his Faith to seek.

2. A Christian is not to make his Graces the Object of his Faith; that is, when a Christian doth behold Love burning within him, when he doth behold influences to prayer increasing, and mortification waxing strong, he is not to build his Faith upon them: this was condemned in the Church, in *Ezek.* 16. 14. compared with the 15. verse, *I made thee perfect with my comeliness*; but the use that thou didst make of it; thou didst *put thy trust in thy beauty*, and then thou didst *play the harlot*. It is certain, that Grace when it is the Object of our Faith, it doth provock God to blast the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oftentimes have that complaint; *Wo to me, my leanness; my leanness testifieth to my face*. I will tell you three great Mysteries in Christianity about Grace; The first is, to ride Marches between these two, not to deny what they have, and yet to be denied to what they have, many times, there is Grace-denying, and not

not Self-denying; but this is that we would press upon you, to be denied to Grace, according to that Word which is recorded of *Moses, his face did shine, and he knew it not*: he did misken it (as it were) and was not at all puffed up with it; for so the words we conceive may run. Secondly, it is a great difficulty for a Christian to be denied to his Self denial, to be humble in his being humble: For if pride can have no other foundation, it will build it self upon humility; and a Christian will grow proud in this, that he is growing humble. Thirdly, It is a difficulty for a Christian to examine his growing in Grace, and not be puffed up; It is certain, a Christian ought to examine his growth in Grace humbly, according to that, *Psal. 63. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.* He doth not only take notice of this, that his Soul did follow after God, but of the measure of that pursuit, *my soul followeth hard after thee*, and yet sweetly acknowledgeth, it was not his own feet which carried him, nor his own hand that kept him from falling.

3. Ye are not to build your Faith upon your Works, and upon the righteousness of the Law: I need not stand long to refute that practical Popery that is amongst us, that thinketh we can go to Heaven through a Covenant of Works. I told you not long since, what your going to Heaven through a Covenant of Works speaketh, even this horrid blasphemy; That it was an act of monstrous folly to send Christ to die for sinners; for, if you can go to Heaven without him, was not then Christ crucified in vain. And I would tell you now, that this speaketh out your damnable ignorance of the weakness and deceitfulness of your own hearts. O ye that are so great defenders of Salvation, by the Covenant of Works, I beseech you, What is the reason that ye break the Covenant of Works oftner than any; for there is none that thinketh they will go to Heaven this way, but those that
are.

are the greatest breakers of the Covenant of Works. And is not that inconsistent, and contradictory Divinity, your faith contradicting your practice, and your practice telling you that your faith is a lie.

Fourthly, We must not mix our own righteousness with Christs, as the object of our believing: This is indeed an evil that often lodgeth in the bosom of the most refined Hypocrite, when Satan cannot prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he is content with that whorish woman, to *divide the child*, and let the object of our faith be half Christ, and half of *self*; And the truth is, many of these poor unwise sons, who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, do willingly hearken to this overture, for fear, it be presumption for such poor wretches to meddle too boldly with the righteousness of Christ, but it were good such weak ones would consider that work, *Rom. 10. 2.* where the Holy Ghost calleth the making use of his righteousness, an act of submission, *They have not submitted* (saith he) *unto the righteousness of Christ.* O will ye not lay this to heart, that our Lord will take your believing, or your putting on his righteousness for an act of great humility, and will take your misbelief as a marvellous act of the highest pride and presumption.

Fifthly, We are not to make providence the object of our faith. I know there are some that ask the ground of their right to Heaven, they will tell us, that God hath been kind to them all their days; I would only say to such, *He may be feeding you unto the day of slaughter, and no man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him.* This much of the object of faith negatively.

And now to speak to it positively, we see the Text holdeth out Christ himself as that excellent and compleat object of Faith, *This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son:* and thus faith closeth with Christ in a fourfold consideration, First, it closeth with God in Christ, not with
God

God immediatly and nakedly; for he dwelleth in light inaccessible, that no man can approach unto; He is higher than the Heaven, what can we do? and deeper than hell, what can we know? Job 11. Therefore we must approach unto him through a vail, even the vail of Christ his flesh, Heb. 10. God is a consuming fire, and of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity: and therefore we must first cast our eyes upon that blessed Daysman, that laid his hand upon us both; and look upon God as in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and so draw near unto him through a Mediator, who is the first and the last, and he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seing he liveth for ever to make intercession for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with Christ, as tendered freely in a Covenant of promise. We would have had nothing to do with Christ, if he had not been given of the Father, and offered himself in a free Covenant of promise; but he being thus holden forth upon terms of free love (which doth utterly abominate hire) and so noble a proclamation issued forth under the great Seal of Heaven, *That whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.* Upon this the poor creature draweth near by vertue of a right, and stretching out the arms of most enlarged affections, doth run upon him with that joyful shout, *My Lord, my God:* and then maketh an absolute Resignation of it self to him; which is holden out in the Scripture by that sweet expression of *kissing the Son.* And there are three parts of Christs blessed body, that the Christian must endeavour to kiss and imbrace: the Mouth of Christ, the Hand of Christ, and the Feet of Christ: the Kissing of his Feet importing the exercise of Love, the Kissing of his Hands the exercise of Subjection, and the Kissing of his Mouth the exercise of communion and fellowship with him. Thirdly, Faith closeth with Christ as the purchaser and meritorious

torious cause of all the good we receive: He is the Person that hath purchased all these things unto us, and there is not one blink of Love, there is not the smallest enjoyment that a Christian meeteth with, but it is the price of the Blood of Christ; Christs precious Blood was laid down for it. Fourthly, Faith closeth with Christ as the efficient and worker of all our Mercies; all our enjoyments are from him as the efficient cause, that is, He is the worker of all these things in us, it is his precious fingers that must accomplish that blessed Work of Grace, and they are from Christ as the dispenser of these things; Christ is the great Steward in Heaven, that doth communicate unto Believers all the Treasures of the Higher-House: *For him hath God the Father sealed.* O! but that Word that Christ once spake, is much verified by himself, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* Christ is that Fountain and Treasure in whom all our Gifts and Graces are Treasured up: for before the blessing come to Believers, they come to Christ as the Head, according to that word, *2 Tim. 1. 9. Which grace was given to us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid.* It was given to Christ before the world was made, and for that end, that it might be communicated unto all His Members, and so out of his fulness we all receive, and Grace for Grace.

But, secondly, The Text holdeth forth more particularly this excellent Object of Faith, to be the Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a stand. It is long since *Agur* did run plus all the World with that question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name, if thou canst tell?* O how little a thing can be known of him! And O how brutish is this Generation! that know not so much less, that might be known of him in such a day of the Gospel. But that we may speak a little, according to our weak measure of faith, as closing with the Name of Christ, His
Name

Name is his glorious Attributes, by which he revealeth so much of himself in the Scriptures, as poor mortals can take up. We did shew you before, that there was three of these that were the main pillars of justifying faith, *Faithfulness, Omnipotency, and his infinit Love and Mercy.* And how from these may be answered all the Objections of Sense, of carnal reason, and of misbelief, arising from convictions of unworthiness. And certain it is, that faith in all its conflicts, maketh much use of the Names of Christ. And there is not an Objection that a poor tempted Soul can make, but faith can make an answer to it, out of some of the excellent Names of God, or of his Son Christ. It would be a more longsome work, than I intend, to let you see this in all; But I shal only instance that in *One glorious Name of God*, by which he proclaimeth his Glory, *Exod. 34. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant on goodness and truth; Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, &c.* I think there are seven ordinary Objections which may be answered from that place. First, It is an ordinary Objection which misbelievers do make, that they are under the strength of their corruption: that they are black as the *Tents of Kedar*, and not beautiful as the *Curtains of Solomon*: And doth not the first letter of that Name answer this, that he is a *merciful Lord*? The one importing his ability to save, and to bring down every high imagination? The other importing his infinit delight to help those who have no strength, and are under the power of their adversaries, the power of God being of no larger extent than his Love. There is that second objection of misbelief, that we have nothing to commend us to Christ; But all that we have to boast of: are infirmities and imperfections; and this is abundantly answered from that second letter of his Name, that he is gracious, which importeth

teth the freedom of the dispensations of his Love, that he walketh not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that golden and excellent rule of Love. It is a great dispute whether Mercy or Grace be the greatest wonder, whether the Love of Christ, or the freedom of it, be the greatest mystery; sure both these put together make up a matchless wonder? Thirdly, Misbelief will object that we have forsaken him days without number; and that we cannot trace back our apostacy unto the first day of its rise; and is not that abundantly answered from that letter of his Name, that he is long-suffering? *This being that glorious attribute in God, the glory of which he desireth to magnifie above all his Names.* Fourthly, Misbelief doth ordinarily propose this Objection, that we have multiplied our transgressions, and have committed *whoredoms under every green tree*; and have given gifts to our lovers, even hiring our idols; so that we may take up that lamentation, is not our sin great, and our transgression infinit? And is not this also answered from that letter of his Name, that he is abundant in goodness? That though sin abound in us, yet grace doth much more superabound in him. We confess indeed, that there are some that may walk under that condition, that if they had no other exercise throughout eternity, but to make confession, they might confess, and never make any needless repetition; And truly in some respect, it is a mercy that we are Mysteries unto our selves; for if we did know completely the seven abominations of our hearts, and these mysterious actings of the body of death, we would be in hazard to choose *strangling and death, rather than life*; yet may not one glimpse of that abundant goodness satisfy us, and calm the storm? Fifthly, saith misbelief, we know that we have broken our vows and covenants with God, and that all these things that we have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of temptation, so that we have

no hope that he will have mercy upon those that have broken wed-lock, and have not been stedfast in his covenant. But is not that abundantly answered from that letter of his Name, *That he is abundant in truth*; which speaketh that, That though we deny our selves, yet he abideth faithful, and doth not alter the words that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the infinit blessedness of men, that though he be changeable, yet they have to do with one that is an unchangeable being. Sixthly, There is that objection, That notwithstanding all these things are matters of encouragement to some, yet they know not whether or not the lot of everlasting Love hath fallen upon them; And whether their names be in the ancient records of Heaven. But this is answered from that letter of his Name, *He keepeth mercy for thousands*, which sheweth us that great number of those upon whom the lot of everlasting Love shal fall; And if there were no other sentence in all the Scripture, this might be a sufficient matter of a song, and might make us cry out, *Who is like unto him, whose compassions have no end?* And who desires to magnifie his mercy above all his works; and lastly, misbelief maketh this objection, they have sinned not only against light, not only against vows, not only after much enjoyment of God, but even after the application of the threatening; So that they conceive, *that their Maker will not have mercy upon such*. Yet this is fully answered likewise from that letter of his Name, *He forgiveth iniquity, transgression and sin*: which three words do abundantly speak forth that there is no transgression which he will not pardon; there being but one particular amongst all that innumerable number of sins which lodgeth in the heart of fallen men, that he declared unpardonable: and there is none of our diseases that is above the infinit Art of Love, and concerning which we can take up that complaint, *There is no Balm in Gilead, and there is*

no Physician there. And though providence may muster up many impossibilities, yet let Faith take the Promise in the one hand, and impossibilities in the other, and desire God to reconcile them; that if we cannot see any connexion between providence and the word, yet may we reflect upon the Omnipotency of God, that can make things that are seeming contrary, sweetly agree together; the Commentary will never destroy the Text, nor Providence will never destroy the faithfulness of God. And let me give you this Advice, that those Objections of misbelief which you cannot answer, and in a manner putteth you to a *non plus*, and when ye have looked over all the *Names of God*, ye cannot find an answer to them, slight them and cover them as we have often told you, was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 19.* where that strong Objection of misbelief appearing before his eyes, *the deadness of his body, and the barrenness of Sarahs womb*, it is recorded of him, *he considered not these things*, as it were, he had a divine transiſion from the Objections of misbelief to the acting of Faith: And this is clear from *Matth. 13. 23, 26.* where that strong Objection of misbelief being proposed against that Woman, that she was not within the compass of Christs commission, she hath a noble way of answering with this, *Lord have mercy upon me.* And (if so we may speak) Faith hath a kind of divine impertinency in answering the objections of misbelief, or rather a holy slighting of them that gaineth the victory, when cavelling with temptations will not do it: The like also may be instanced in his Sons Name: O how glorious Titles are given to that *Prince of the kings of the earth*, and to that *Plant of renown*, upon which the weakest Faith may cast anchor, and ride out the greatest storm. I shal not detain you long on this Subject; but this we would have you know that there is no straint or difficulty that a Christian can be exposed unto, but there is some name or attribute

attribute of Christ that may sweetly answer that difficulty, and make up that disadvantage. If a Christian be exposed unto Afflictions and Troubles in a present World, let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the shadow of a great Rock in a wearied land. Is a Christian under inward anxiety and vexation of mind, let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the God of peace and of all consolation. Is a Christian under darkness and confusion of spirit, let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the Father of light, and is the eternal wisdom of God. Is a Christian under the convictions of this, that he is under the power and dominion of his lusts, let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is Redemption; yea (that I stay no longer) if it were possible that a Christian could have a necessity that he could not find a name in Christ to answer it, he may lawfully frame a name to Christ out of any promise in all the Book of God, and he should find it forth-coming for the relieving and making up of that necessity, God would not disappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to the Object of Faith, which we shal desire you to take notice of; and it is the way of Faiths closing with its noble Object, and its resting on him: And this we conceive may be excellently taken up by our considering of the many several Names that Faith getteth in Scripture, beyond any other of the Graces of the Spirit. It is called looking, *Ijai. 45. 22. Look unto me.* It is called abiding in Christ, *Joh. 15. 4. Abide in me.* It is called a keeping silence unto God, *Psal. 30. 7. My soul trust in God:* Or as the word is in the Original, *My soul be silent unto God;* and that in *Psal. 62. 1. My soul waiteth;* Or as the word is, *Truly my soul is silent unto God.* Likewise, Faith is called a leaning, *Psal. 7. 15. I have leaned upon thee from my mothers womb.* Faith it is called an eating of Christs flesh, *Joh. 6. 53. Faith is called a casting of our burthen upon*
God,

God, Psal. 55. 22. *Cast your burden upon God*: And Faith, it is called, *a coming unto God*, Mat. 11. 28. And according to these different names, there are seven noble properties, and matchless differences of this Grace of Faith; The first is, That this is this grace by which a Christian doth enjoy much communion with God: Hence it is called a *looking*; which importeth, that faith is a continual contemplation of the immortal soul, upon that precious and excellent object Jesus Christ. There is that second property of faith; That it is that Grace by which a communion with God is maintained: Hence it is called an *abiding in God*. It is that grace which maketh Christ and the Believer to dwell together. The third property of faith is, that it is a most submissive grace; Hence it is called a *keeping silence unto God*; Faith as it were, it knoweth not what it is to repine; it is the noble excellency of faith, it never knew what it was to misconstrue Christ, it is the noble excellency of faith, it never knew what it was to pass an evil report upon Christ. Faith it will promise good things to a Christian in the darkest night; for when Love asketh Faith that question, *Izal. 21. 11, 12. Watchmen, what of the night? Watchmen, what of the night? Or, when shall the morning break?* Faith answereth it with the words that follow (only a little inverting the order) *The night cometh and also the morning*, the morning is approaching, that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of faith, it is the grace that keepeth a Christian in perseverance, by its building upon the Rock. Hence it is called a *leaning upon God*: For a Christian by faith doth perpetually joyn himself to Christ, so that whatever trouble he be cast into by faith, he cometh out of *that wilderness leaning upon his beloved*, and by faith he is led up to the rock that is higher than he, where he may sit in safety, and even laugh at death and destruction, when assailing him. There

is the fifth property of Faith: that it is the grace that bringeth satisfaction unto the spiritual senses of a Christian, by a close and particular application of Christ as the nourishment of the soul. Hence it is called an *eating of the flesh of Christ*. There are three senses that Faith satisfieth: Faith satisfieth the sense of sight, it satisfieth the sense of taste, and it satisfieth the sense of touch: Faith it will make a Christian *handle that eternal word of life*: Faith it will make a Christian see *that noble plant of renown*: And Faith will make a Christian *taste and see how gracious the Lord is*. And no doubt, these that have once satisfied their sight, they will be longing to satisfy their taste. There is that sixth property of Faith, It is that grace which giveth rest unto a Christian: Hence it is called *a casting of our burden upon him*: It is as it were, the soul giving unto Christ that unsupportable yoke of our iniquities, and taking from Christ that ease and portable yoke of his Commandments. And seventhly, There is that last property of Faith; it is that grace by which Sanctification is promoted: Hence it is called *a coming to Christ*: It is the soul in a divine motion and traveling from the land of *Egypt* unto the land of *Canaan*: Faith is the soul in a pleasant motion from the land of the north, the land of our captivity, unto the land of perfect liberty, all along going out by *the footsteps of the flock*, and walking in that new and living way, even in him *who is the way, the truth and the life*.

And now for a more full application of this, we shall speak but to two things further. 1. We would have it considered, that there are some that come unto the Covenant of Promise with less difficulty, and after a more divine and evangelick way; and there are some that close with Christ, in a more difficult and legal way; there are some that before they can come to mount Sion, they must dwell fourty days at mount Sinai. There are some, before the decree of heaven shall be given to them, they must roar as an

ox, and must cover themselves with sackcloth, having ashes upon their heads. We must be a *Benoni* before we be a *Benjamin*: that is, we must be a son of sorrow, before we can be a son of *Consolation*. But this is certain, that Christ leadeth sometimes some to himself through a valley of *Roses*: And I would only have you taking notice of these two, which though we conceive they be not infallible in the rule, yet oftentimes experience maketh them out to be truth: That there are three sorts of persons who are most ordinarily brought under great terrours, ere they close with Christ. First, These who have committed some gross and abominable sin that is most contradicting unto the light of nature. Secondly, That person that sinneth much against light; before conversion. Hence it is observed in all the Books of the Gospel, and in the Book of the *Acts*, there was more Gospel and Love in the way of converting the Gentiles, than was of converting the *Jews*, see *Acts* 2. 37. There is a sharp Law exercised among them who had crucified the Lord of Life: and *Acts* 9. *Paul* that had been a grievous persecuter, at his conversion, he is first stricken dead to the ground before he be made a captive to the Love of Christ, and constrained to cry out, *What wilt thou have me to do?* But look to *Acts* 8. and Chap. 19. and there ye will find a more fair and smooth way of begetting sons to Christ. And thirdly, that person that is much in conceit of his own righteousness, he useth to be brought to Christ through much terrour and exercise of the Law: that is clear in *Paul*, his condition also, *Phil.* 3. and *Act.* 9. compared, certainly, whosoever thinketh to come that length in self-abasement, and will count as the Apostle doth in that Chapter, must dwell many days at Mount Sinai, and learn his Arithmetick there. 2. We would have you taking notice of this, that though the person that is brought to Christ in a more smooth and Evangelick way, may have the prehemineny of the person that is brought to Christ

after a more Legal and Terrible way in some things, yet we conceive, that a Christian that is brought to Christ through much of the exercise of the Law, and through many of the thundrings of Mount *Sinai*, after he hath won to see his right of Christ, he is more constant in the exercise of faith; and the reason of it is, because that an ordinary ground of misbelief is our not distinct up-taking either of the time of our conversion, which is oftentimes hid from these persons that are converted in a more Evangelick way, as likewise this, that those persons that are brought to Christ in a more Gospel Chariot, are sometimes put to debates, whether ever they were under the exercise of the Law, and this maketh them often (as it were) to raze the foundation, and to cry forth, *My hope, and my strength is perished from the Lord*. And now to shut up our discourse, we shall add this one word of exhortation; that ye would carefully lay hold upon that noble Object, and exercise your faith upon him; and I shall say but this, that all these that have this noble Grace of faith, and that are Heirs of that everlasting inheritance: There is a fourfold Crown prepared for you, There is a Crown of Life that is prepared for him that shall fight that good fight of faith; but what may you say is a Crown of Life, except we have joy waiting upon that Life; for what is Life without Joy, but a bitterness, and a burden to it self; Therefore ye shall have a Crown of Joy; but what were a Crown of Life, and a Crown of Joy, except we had the Grace of Holiness, and were compleat in that: Therefore, ye shall have also a Crown of Righteousness: But what were Life, Joy and Righteousness, without Glory: Therefore ye shall have likewise a Crown of Glory: But what of all these, if that Crown should once fall from our head, and we should be deprived of our Kingdom? Therefore, take this to make up all the rest, it is an eternal Crown of Glory. That word in *Prov. 27.* near the close, *The Crown, saith Solomon,*

doth

doth endure for ever: But this precious Crown that the hands of Christ shal fix upon the head of an over-coming Christian, this is the Motto that is engraven upon it, *Unchangeable and Eternal, Eternal and Unchangeable*. And O what a day suppose ye shal that be, when that precious Crown shal be put upon our heads? What think ye will be the difference betwixt Christ and the Believers in Heaven? They shal have these four Crowns which are indeed one: but Christ shal have upon his head many Crowns, according to that Word, *Rev. 19. 12*. But let me say one word also to you who are strangers from God, and are destitute of the Grace of Christ, and will not by Faith close with this excellent Object. There is a fourfold Crown that once shal be put upon your heads, but do not misinterpret the vision: There is difference betwixt the *Butler* and the *Baker*; Ye may prophesie good things to your selves, but there is a Crown of Death which ye shal once have put upon your Heads: ye shal be always dying, and yet never able to die: There is a Crown of sorrow that ye shal have put upon your heads, when ye shal eternally sigh forth that lamentation; *O to be annihilate and reduced unto nothing*; when the reduction of you into nothing would be a Heaven, when ye shal be tormented in those everlasting Flames. And I would say this by the way, ye will be all miserable and comfortless one to another, there will be no ground of Consolation that ye shal reap, for the community of your sorrow shal increase the degrees of that sorrow; And there is another Crown also that ye shal put on, and that is a Crown of *Sin*, instead of that *Crown of Righteousness*: would ye know your exercise. O ye that are predestinate unto these everlasting pains? Would ye know your exercise? It is this, ye shal eternally *blaspheme* and *curse* the God that made you. I am perswaded of this, that the Terroures of Hell will afflict you more, and doth then that of the sinning perpetually in Hell: Ye would

think nothing many of you to be in Hell, if there were no pain there; for the exercise of sin it will be your delight and life: but be perswaded of it, that when your Conscience is awaked, the exercise of sinning shal exceedingly aggravat your pain. And there is this Crown lastly, that ye shal put on, and that is the *Crown of shame*: The Prophet *Isaiah* maketh mention of a *crown of pride*; but ye that have put on that Crown of everlasting confusion and shame, when ye shal not be able to lift up your eyes to him, *whom ye have pierced*; I would fain desire you to know, what will be your exercise at these three days, what will be your exercise when death shal be summonding you to remove and ye shal first be entered heirs unto these everlasting pains; I am perswaded ye will reflect much: will ye not reflect upon many Sermons that ye have heard, wherein ye have been invited to partake of the sweet offers of Salvation: I remember of one that upon his Death-bed cryed forth, *A world for time, a world for one inch of time*, one that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater than the greatest here, his Crown could not purchase one inch of time, but dying with this, *Call time again, call time again*; that petition was denyed, and so shal it be, I fear to the most part that are here, I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the *Egyptians*, they painted time with three heads; The first head that pointed out Time that was past, *was a greedy Wolf gapping*, which importeth this, That our Time past was mis-spent, and there was nothing left, but like a Wolf to gape for it again: And there was that second head of a *roaring Lyon round*, which imports the Time present, and for this end was so painted, that people might lay hold upon their present opportunities, otherwise it would be the matter of their ruine, and of their eternal undoing. And there was that last Head, which was a *deceitful Dog fanning*, which signifieth, that people may deceive themselves with the Time to come, thinking they will be religious at their Death, and that they

they will overcome at their death, but this is flattery, no better than the fawning of a mad Dog. I think we may learn much of this, even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that we will not lose our time, but that we buy it. There are two things that a Christian must not sell, that is, sell not the *Truth*, but buy it, and sell not *your Time*, but buy it. I am persuaded of this, that one moment of Time is worth ten thousand of worlds, if improved; And I would ask you what advantage shall ye have of all things that ye have tormented your selves about when time shall be no more, I suppose indeed this is an ordinary evil amongst the people of this Age, of which we have our own share and portion; There are many that envy Godliness, and the Godly, *The excellent ones that are in the Earth*, that think it pleasure to vent their malice against such, I know that ordinary practice; it is older by a thousand years than themselves, but they persecute Godliness under the name of Hypocrisie; They call Godliness Hypocrisie, and upon that account they begin and speak maliciously against it; only I would ask you this question, what will you say in that day when Christ will ask that question at you, that Gideon asked at Zeba and Zalmunna, who are these that ye killed with your tongue? Must it not be answered, *Every one did resemble the person of a King*. O will ye not believe! will ye not close with Christ? I know it is ordinary that we run upon these two extremes. Sometimes we do not believe the threatnings of the Law, and sometimes we will not believe the Promises of the Gospel. But I would only desire to know, what if it had been so ordered in the infinit wisdom of God, that all the Letters of this Book should have been threatnings; what should have been our lot; if all the Promises should have been scraped out of it: But certainly this must be your Lot, all the Promises of the Book of the Covenant shall be taken from you, and all the Curses thereof

shal be a flying Roll, that shal enter within your Houses, and shal eternally there remain. Know this, O ye that are enemies to Christ, know it, and think upon it. *Every battel of the warrior is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood:* But that war that Christ shal have against the *Hypocrites in Zion*, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with him, it shal be *with fewel of fire, and eternal indignation.* O what will be your thoughts, suppose you, when Christ shal come with that two edged sword of the fury of the Lord to enter to fight with you? It is no delightfome exercise. O that ye were not almost but altogether perswaded to be Christians, and that once Christ may conquer you with that two edged sword *that proceedeth out of his mouth*, that so you might subject your selves to Him, and make Him the Object of your Faith. Now to Him that hath engraven upon His *vesture, and on his thigh, that he is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords*, we desire to give praise.

A S E R M O N

Concerning the Great SALVATION.

Heb. 2: 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THis everlasting Gospel, which is preached unto you, is that glorious *Star*, which must lead us to the place where blessed Christ doth ly. This Gospel, and glad tydings of this Great Salvation, is come near unto you; And Christ is standing at the everlasting doors of your hearts, desiring that ye would open unto Him. There is that one great Request which Heaven, this day hath to present unto you, and it is, That ye would

The Great Salvation.

97

would at last imbrace this Great Salvation, freely offered by Him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that since the days of your Fathers, and since the beginning of your own days, ye have stopped your ears from that sweet and chaunting voice of this blessed Charmer, *Ye would never dance to Christ when he piped, neither would ye weep to him when he lamented.*

But to come to the words which we have read unto you; The Apostle in the former Chapter hath been discoursing most divinely of the matchless and incomparable excellencies which are in our blessed Lord Jesus; And in the first verse of this second Chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former Doctrine which in short, is this, That they would take heed to the blessed Doctrine of the Gospel; *And not at any time to let it slip out of our minds,* and that they would keep his Gospel as a Jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this Exhortation he presseth by two Arguments.

The first Argument is in the second verse, where he saith, *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, &c.* That is, if the transgression of the Law, which was delivered but by the Ministry of *Angels*, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished. Let that provock you to take heed, that ye transgress not the precious Gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The second Argument is in the words which we have read unto you, and it is taken from the certain and infallible stroak of the Justice of God, which shal come upon those who slight this Great Salvation, It is impossible (saith he) that there can be a city of refuge for those who slight this *Great Salvation.*

Now in the words which we have read, there are these six things to be considered.

I. First, That it is an evil incident to the hearers of this precious Gospel and Great Salvation, to slight

and undervalue it, This is clearly presupposed in the words, otherwise there had been no ground, or access for the Apostle to threaten so terrible things against the slighers of it.

II. The second thing to be considered in the words, is, That the stroak and ruine of those who slight this Great Salvation, is certain, and infallible, it will surely come upon them: This is clear from these words, *How shall we escape?* As if he had said, there is no imaginable way for us to escape, if we neglect (this) so Great Salvation: We may have a city of refuge when we are pursued by the Law; or when we are pursued by afflictions, and we may escape when we are pursued otherwise by the Justice of God; but if once we slight this Great Salvation, there remaineth no city of refuge (no door of escape left open) unto us: for where will the person flee that sligheth this Great Salvation?

III. There is a third thing whereof we shal take notice from the words, That the stroak of the Justice of God cometh justly upon them who slight this Great Salvation; and truly it is a most equal and reasonable stroak, which is also clear from the words, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation!* where he puts it home to their Consciences, as if he had said, think ye not that it is just and righteous that (if ye slight this Great Salvation) there should not be a door of escape left open unto you? He putteth the question home to their Conscience to answer, yea, or no.

IV. The fourth thing to be considered in the words, is this, That the slighting this Great Salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations, which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two aggravations from the words which I have read; The first *great aggravation*, in that word of the Text, *Great Salvation*, as if he had said, if it were not a *Great Salvation*, ye might have some cloak or excuse for your slighting of it: but seing it is such a great and eternal Salvation, there is now no cloak left for your sin. The second aggravation is from the certainty

certainty of this Salvation, in these words, *Which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him, viz. his Apostles, whereby he telleth them, this Great Salvation is no notion nor fancy, but a most certain, sure, and real Salvation, which yet they slight.*

V. The fifth thing whereof we shal take notice from the words, is this, That there are no persons (be who they will, Minister or People) who slight this Great Salvation, that shal have a door of escape ; Hence it is, that the Apostle putteth himself among the rest, saying, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? That is, How shall I Paul escape, if I neglect so great salvation, and so frustrat the grace of God ?*

VI. Sixthly, We would take notice of this from the words, That not only heart-despising of this Great Salvation, but even also the neglecting of it, bath a certain infallible and unspeakable ruine attending upon it.

Now before we speak to any of these six things (which we have observed from the words) There are these two things wereunto we shal speak a little for clearing of the words. First, What is meant here by *Great Salvation* : Secondly, How it is said that Christ was the *first Preacher of it*.

First, we conceive, that by the Great Salvation, is understood the Gospel, as is clear, *Eph. 1. 13.* Where it is called *the Gospel of our salvation*, and *Acts 13. 26.* it is called *the word of this salvation* ; So that by the Word of this Salvation is understood the Gospel, and these precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive, it may be called a Great Salvation, in these eight respects.

I. First It is called the Great Salvation, in respect of the price that was laid down for it ; There being no less price laid down to purchase this Great Salvation, than the *blood of the Son of God*. From whence then doth Salvation flow unto you ? It comes running to you in a stream of the Blood of the Son of God. This

is clear, *Heb. 9. 12.* Neither by the blood of goats and Calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, obtained eternal redemption for us.

I I. Secondly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the many difficulties and opposition which he had in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments (suppose ye) lay in Christs way before he could accomplish and bring about this Great Salvation? Was not the Justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and be made like unto one of us? Was he not to ly in the Grave? And was he not to bear the torments of Hell, before this Great Salvation could be accomplished and brought to pass? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this Great Salvation, that if all the Angels in Heaven had been set to the work, they had been all crushed under it, had it been but that one great impediment, *to satisfy the Justice*, and pacifie the wrath of God, even that was a pass, through which none could go, but the eternal Son of God; It was so guarded, that none durst adventure to enter it (much less could any win through it) save he only, *who was mighty to save.*

I I I. Thirdly, it is called a Great Salvation, in respect of that high estimation which the Saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the Saints of this Gospel Salvation? There is no mercy which they think comparable to this, all other mercies are but little *zoars* in comparison of this Great Mercy, and Gospel Salvation.

I V. Fourthly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of these noble effects, which this Salvation bringeth about, and produceth. Some of the great effects of the Gospel, *David* hath cleared, *Psal. 19. 7, 8, 9, 10.* Is not this a great effect, (of this Gospel Salvation) to bring us out of Nature into an estate of Grace? And that is an effect of this Great Salvation: is not this a great effect, to make us who were Enemies, to become Friends? And that is an effect of this Great Sal-
vation?

vation? Is not this a great effect, to make us who were moving in the way to Hell, move in the way to Heaven? And that is an effect of this Great Salvation: Is not this a great effect, to make us who were *far off*, to be now *made near*? And yet this is the effect of this Great Salvation. And is not that a great effect, to make us *who were darkness*, to become *light in the Lord*? And that is the great effect of this Gospel Salvation? Yea, I may say, time would fail me to tell of the great effects of this Great Salvation? But O will ye come and see, and that will best resolve the question unto you, what the noble effects of this Great Salvation are.

V. Fifthly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the great advantages which redound to the person who imbraceth it. First, Is not Heaven a noble advantage? and that is the gain, which attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Secondly, Is not Jesus Christ a notable advantage? And yet he is the advantage which attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Thirdly, Is not eternal communion with God a notable advantage? And that advantage attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Fourthly, Is not eternal Liberation from the body of Death, a great advantage? And that attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Fifthly, Is not eternal singing in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? and that attendeth the imbracers of this Salvation. Sixthly, Is not eternal seeing of God as he is, a great and noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Would ye be honourable? Come and imbrace this Great Salvation. Would ye be eternally happy? O then come and partake of this Great Salvation.

V I. Sixthly, It is called a Great Salvation in respect of all other Salvations that ever were accomplished. There was never a Salvation, or victory obtained by any General or Captain (unto a Land or People) that could have the name of Great Salvation in comparison of this,

VII, Seventhly,

VII. Seventhly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the Authority of it. We have spoken of the greatness (as to the meritorious cause) of it, and how great things it doth effectuat; and also in respect of the authority of it, it is a Great Salvation. Would ye know who is the author of this Great Salvation. It is Christ, *Heb. 5. 9. He became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* And must not this Salvation be suitable to him who is the Author of it. This is not the most noble and irradiant beams of the Majesty of the Son of God the Mediator, that he is the Author of this Great Salvation.

VIII. Eighthly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a Salvation which is but for a day: but it is an eternal Salvation, *Heb. 9. 12. He obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Now the second thing whereunto we shal speak, for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How it is said, That Christ was the first Preacher of this eternal Salvation? We do not think that the words are thus to be understood, that the Gospel, and this Great Salvation was never preached before Christ came in the flesh; but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, That all the Preaching of this Great Salvation under the Law, did come very far short in the point of fulness, in comparison of Christs preaching of it; Therefore is Christ said to be the first preacher of this Great Salvation: As if he had said, I know Adam he preached of this Great Salvation: And Enoch, he preached of this Great Salvation: And the twelve Patriarchs, they preached of this Great Salvation: And all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in Heaven, they preached of this Great Salvation; But all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching, in comparison of Christ; for, *never man spake as he spake.* Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this Great Salvation.

II. Secondly,

II. Secondly, This may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation, in respect of his clear way of preaching of it: for he was the first preacher of it without Types and Shadows, he was the first preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. Thirdly, The meaning of this (that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation) may relate to this appearing to *Adam* in Paradise, when he became the first and great preacher of this great salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, *The seed of the woman shall tread down the head of the serpent.* The first glorious preaching of this great salvation was, when Christ preached it to *Adam* in Paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shal speak a little to the first of these six things which we observed from the words, *viz.*

That there are many within the visible Church, who are neglecters and slighers of this great salvation; (do you not all take with it?) It is clear, *Mat. 23.* towards the close, and *Chap. 22. 5.* Where these persons being invited to come to the Marriage, or Feast of the Gospel, it is said of them, *They made light of it.* Which are the same words in our Text. And *Luke 14. 18.* When they were invited to come, it is said, *They all with one consent began to make their excuse.* And *Isa. 28. 2.* *This is the rest wherewith ye shall make the weary to rest, this is the refreshing, yet they will not hear.* Now is there a person here who dare deny this Charge, that he is a sligher of this great salvation? I confess, I am afraid that ye will not take with it; Therefore I shal propose eight sorts of persons who are slighers of this great salvation. And I charge you, as ye will answer to God one day, that ye search your hearts, whether ye be among the number (in the Catalogue) of the slighers of this great salvation.

I. The first sort of persons, who are slighers of this great salvation, are these persons who go about to establish

bliss their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ (in a word) it is that sort of persons, who think they may win to Heaven by a Covenant of Works, and will not take the Gospels way of travelling to Heaven in the Covenant of Grace. And surely there is not a person here, who hath not that cursed inclination to be as little obliged to Christ (for his salvation) as he can. We would go to Heaven without *the Way*, which is Christ. And (believe me) there are many in this Congregation, who go thus about to establish their own righteousness. And I shal propose six sorts of persons who shal fall under the first rank.

1. The first sort are these who trust on their own civility, and think these will carry them to Heaven; These are the persons who go about to establish their own righteousness. Say they, I defy the World to say any thing to me, *I was evermore an honest man*, and I trust therefore that I shal go to Heaven; But I say to thee, (O Atheist that thou art) thou shalt never win to Heaven by these means, till thou come to Christ with this, *All my righteousness is as filthy rags*.

2. The second sort are these, who build their confidence upon their denial of their good Works, but yet come this length to make use of Jesus Christ.

3. The third sort are these, who build their confidence upon their Duties; They think they will come to Heaven by their good Prayers, by their Reading, and by their Fasting, (like unto that Pharisee, *Luk. 18. 11. I thank God, I am not like other men: for I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I possess;*) But I say unto thee, thy Duties will never bring thee to Heaven, if Christ be not at the end of all thy Duties, nor can ye perform any duty without him.

4. The fourth sort of persons who fall under this first rank of flighters of the Great Salvation, are those who trust on their own convictions. If they have once been convinced of their sin and miserable estate, they think there is no more to do, Christ will never reject them,

them, so they sit down and build their hope upon these convictions.

5. The fifth sort of persons are these who build their confidence upon their resolutions. Say they, oftentimes have I resolved to be a better man than I am: therefore I think (which is the fearful delusion of many) that *God will accept the will for the deed*: But it had been good for many, such a word had not been in the Bible, or that their cursed eyes had never read it. But know this, that though thou hast as strong resolutions as *Peter*, or as good wishes as *Balaam* had, if thou never labour to bring them to practice, God shal say unto thee, *Depart from me, I know you not*. Any of you who build upon your resolutions, ye build upon a sandy foundation, these being many times a goodness, but like the morning dew.

6. And the sixth sort of persons who fall under this first rank of slights of this Great Salvation, (and wherein the evil is most subtile) are these who build their Salvation upon their Graces; these also go about to establish their own righteousness. But I say to thee, Thy Graces cannot be the foundation of thy Hope, although they may be as evidences to strengthen thy hope. Now are there none here who fall under this first rank of slights of this Great Salvation; or are there none here who will confess that they have gone about to establish their own righteousness? I say to thee, who will confess, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Christ; for he is a merciful King: I say to thee, come to Christ with this, *All my righteousness is like filthy rags*: And if thou wilt come with this in sincerity, he shal say, *Bring forth the white robe, and put it upon him*: If thou canst be brought to speak that in sincerity to Christ, there shal be no more betwixt Christ and thee, But, *Come and cloath him with the white robe*.

2. Secondly, These persons slight the Great Salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Gospel: For there are many (when we preach

preach this Gospel, and when we hold out the Great Salvation unto them) who say, *I will follow Christ, but I must first go home and bury my father*; and so they delay to take hold of this Great Salvation: But I say to you (who ever ye be) that thus delay to take hold on this Great Salvation, ye are the slighers of it. Is there a person within these doors, who dare but acknowledge that he hath slighted this Great Salvation, and delay to imbrace it? O tell me! What do your consciences Ipeak? Are there any but they must acknowledge they come under the second rank? And I say to you, who have thus delayed, will ye yet imbrace it? I say even unto you who are old men (now past sixty years, and have slighted this Great Salvation so long) yet this day this Great Salvation is offered unto you? What say you to it? O what say ye to this offer? Are ye saying I must now delay (and not receive this Great Salvation) till my Harvest be by, and over? I say unto thee, that the harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and he shal put in his sickle, and cut thee down. I will say no more to thee who thus slight this Great Salvation; but this, *Why stand ye all the day in the Market place idle, and doing nothing*. O will ye at last be induced to take and embrace this Great Salvation, before it be hid from your eyes.

III. Thirdly, These persons are the slighers of this Great Salvation, who complement with Christ when they are invited to come and partake of it: And say silently to the Minister, (or rather to their own Consciences) *I pray you have me excused at this time*, as these, *Luk. 4. 18*. But I would only ask at such, have ye any lawful excuse, why ye will not come and partake of this Great Salvation? Is there any person here that hath any lawful excuse to present? I shal never take this off your hands, *Have me excused*; But be sure of this, it shal never excuse you, but accuse you. Therefore I desire that these persons, who have slighted this Great Salvation, by complementing with Christ, that they

they would complement no more with him at all, but now embrace it.

IV. The fourth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who give way to discouragement and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this great salvation, I say, such of you are slights of it, and Christ will esteem you such. Oh if ye knew the worth and vertue of this Great Salvation, there would not be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from embracing it, but if thou could not answer these Temptations, thou would not owne them. I say unto such undervaluers and slights of the Great Salvation as discouraged persons, (*And these who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*) that when ye cannot answer your Objections, which hinder you from closing with Christ, I intreat you disowne them, as if ye heard them not: Say ye, Think ye this lawful? I say, it is both lawful and expedient, for it was the practice of believing Abraham, *He considered not his own body, being dry, as an old stick, nor the deadness of Sarahs womb.* He did not consider these things which might have been Objections to keep him from believing. He might have started at these two objections. Alas, I am old, and that objection could he not answer: And my wife is past child-bearing, neither could he answer that objection. What then did he with them? He slighted them both, and considered them not. Secondly, I would say this to you, who thus slight it because of discouragements: If ye did know the worth of the Great Salvation, which is in this Gospel Redemption, that is offered unto you, although he had an Army of Objections to go through, ye would go through them all, *To get a drink of the water of this well of Bethlehem.*

V. The fifth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who will not do so much as take care, and give pains to hear this Great Salvation offered unto them; for there are some persons (who, if they

they come to the Church) desire to sit farthest off, and so never take care to hear a word of this Great Salvation: And are such dreadful slighers of it, like unto these mentioned, *Jer. 6. 10. To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Iſai. 23. 2. But they would not hear. Jer. 7. 10. Who says, we are delivered to all these abominations: yet they did come and stand before him, in the house which was called by his name.*

V I. Sixthly, These persons are slighers of this Great Salvation, who, (when they hear it) are more, nay not so much affected with it, than if we were reading unto them the most senseless History of *Thomas the Rymer*, or some other old Fable; like unto these mentioned, *Jer. 6. 10. The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* I would pose you all as in the sight of the Author of this Great Salvation, (men or women) did you ever set your selves (or took ye ever pains) to bring up your hearts to the love of this Great Salvation? was it ever the rejoycing of your hearts that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it (and I am perswaded) that there are Decrees past in Heaven against many of you, *That in hearing ye shall hear, but not understand; and in seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For God hath made your hearts harder than the Flint or Adamant; so that ye shal refuse to return when he doth exhort you.* Believe me, (if I may so speak) I think there is as much probability that the stones of the Wall would hear (if we would speak to them) as soon as many of you.

V I I. Seventhly, These persons are slighers of the Great Salvation, who did never complain that they wanted a right to this Great Salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compass of this Great Salvation: I say yet unto you, if ye did never spend one hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this Gospel-Redemption,

Redemption, it is but too probable you never yet had a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would little care to let precious Christ depart without any grief of heart; I think if this were voiced within this House to day, whether or not shal Christ go and depart? I doubt if there would be many heart dissenters, though many Tongue-dissenters: Oh, I fear there would be many hearts here, saying, O Christ, depart and go thy way: yea there are many *Gadarens* here, *who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their coasts.*

VIII. Eighthly, These persons slight the Great Salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the Gospel, Christ is near to you this day: The Great Salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you; Therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obtest you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, that ye come and partake of it; *I obtest you* by all the joys of Heaven, that ye embrace this Great Salvation: *I obtest you*, by all the terrours in Hell, that ye embrace it: *I obtest you*, by the promises of the everlasting Covenant, that ye embrace it: *I obtest you* by all the curses that are written in this Book of the Covenant, that ye embrace it: *I obtest you* by the love that ye owe to your immortal souls, that ye would once be wise, and come and partake of this Great Salvation: May I now have it, sayest thou? Yea, I say unto all, ye may have it to day, ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence: And so before I proceed any further, I do in the Name and Authority of him who sent me here to day, (and is the Author of this Great Salvation.) freely offer it unto you; Therefore take it of my hand, embrace this Great Salvation offered to you to day; But I know there will be eight sorts of humours within this house to day, in relation to this Great Salvation, which is now offered unto you.

1. I think there will be some of *Gallio's* disposition here to day, that will care for none of these things; Yea, there are many here who will not give a fig for the rich offer of the Great Salvation; But, I say, cursed be that person who puts on *Gallio's* temper (to day) that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilat's* humour here (to day) who will say, they find nothing against the man; yet will cry forth, *Take him and crucifie him*: They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this Great Salvation? Produce your strong arguments, are there any here who have any thing to say against him? I am here to answer in his Name: I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this Great Salvation; And why then do ye not take him? See unto your selves, that there be none of *Pilat's* humour here to day, that will cry out, *Ye find nothing in Christ why he should not be received*, and yet will be content that he be crucified,

3. There will be many of the Jews here to day, who cry forth, *Away with Christ, away with Christ, and give me Barabbas*. But oh! what a hellish word is that, *Away with spotless Christ, away with transcendent Christ, and give us the world*? Now are there any here who will be so gross flighters of this Great Salvation: Will ye slight this Great Salvation, and embrace your Idols, which shal once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will be some of *Felix* humour found here to day, that will say, *O Christ, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient season*. But, I say unto you who will not hear me to day, nor embrace this Great Salvation, I shal defy all the Ministers in Scotland to assure you, that ye shal get another offer, if ye send me away to day. There is not one that can, or dare engage, that the Great Salvation shal be

be in your offer any more. Therefore I say, let none of *Felix* temper be here to day, that will say, *They will hear Christ at a more convenient season.*

5. There will be some of *Balaam's* temper (to day) who will desire to die the death of the righteous, and to have their last end like his; yet they desire not to live the life of the righteous. But I say unto you, ye shal never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

6. There will be some of you here (to day) who (I hope) at least will be of *Agrippa's* humour, that will say, *Thou hast almost perswaded me to be a Christian.* I say unto thee, O wilt thou quickly out with that word, *almost*, and put in that word altogether, and say, O precious Christ, *Thou hast altogether perswaded me to be a Christian.* However, if thou come no greater length, I intreat thee come this length, that so thou may cry out, *I am almost perswaded to embrace Christ the Great Salvation*; and it may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will be some of *Judas* temper here (to day) *Who will berray Christ for thirty pieces of silver*; Yea, some would sell Christ, Heaven, their Idols and all for less than *thirty pieces of silver.*

8. I think there will be many of *Esau's* prophane temper here (to day) *Who will sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage.* Now will ye enquire at your selves, Am I the person that will give my birth-right for a mess of pottage? Doth my heart say, *I will sell my birth-right, because I am hungred, and ready to die? What will it profit me, give me a mess of pottage, and I will quite my birth-right?* I know it, there are not a few such here to day; Therefore I intreat you, enquire at your selves what is your humour. Oh shal the Great Salvation that ye have slighted so long, be slighted this day also, and shal there be none to embrace it? Oh enquire, and stand in aw, lest the wrath of the most High pursue you.

Now I shal give you these seven considerations, which may

may provock you not to slight (but embrace) this Great Salvation.

I. The first Consideration, That the not embracing of this Great Salvation is one of the greatest acts of folly that can be, *Jer. 8. 9. They have rejected the word of the Lord: (and immediatly it is subjoynd) And, what wisdom is in them?* And so Solomon doth assure you they cannot be wise who neglect this Great Salvation; *Prov. 1. 7. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.* Therefore may I not say unto you, be who ye will (though ye were the greatest heads of wit in all this place) ye are but stark fools as long as ye neglect this. But would ye be wise indeed, and wise unto eternal life, then I intreat you come and imbrace this Great Salvation.

II. The second Consideration, to provock you not to slight the Great Salvation, is this, That the ruine and destruction of the slighers of it is most certain and infallible, *Jer. 11. 11.* Where speaking of slighting the Covenant, which is indeed the same Great Salvation, there is a *Therefore* put in the threatning: *Therefore thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape.* I defy you all who are the slighers of this Great Salvation, to find a back door when Justice shal pursue you. For there is no door to escape, if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation: But *The earth will disclose your iniquity, and heaven will declare your sin.*

III. Thirdly, Let this Consideration provock you not to slight this Great Salvation, that Christ is exceeding serious, and earnest that ye would imbrace it. And I think that, *Isai. 28. 23.* speaketh out his exceeding seriousness: where four times he beggeth of his hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice (saying) *Give ear, and hear my voice, hearken, and hear my speech.* What needeth all these exhortations? But that Christ is most serious, that they would embrace the Great Salvation. And O that there were a person here (to day) as serious to the bargain as

Christ

Christ is! But, be who ye will that slight this Great Salvation, (believe me) the day is coming wherein ye shal cry out, alas for the slighting of it. Wilt thou therefore think presently with thy self (O thou slighter of this Great Salvation) what wilt thou say of thy slighting of it, when the Devil shal be leading thee in thorow these dark Gates of Hell? O slighter of the Gospel, how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing thorow these dark Gates into thy everlasting Prison? Wilt thou not then cry out, (O me, slighter of the everlasting Salvation) whether am I now going? Alas, now for my slighting of the Gospel: And as thou passest thorow, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that Prison that can comfort thee: But many dreadful alaces shal thou then both cry and hear, if thou embrace not this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, Let this provock you not to slight the Great Salvation, that ye will get it for a very look. O ye within this house to day, ye will get this Great Salvation for one look, *Isa. 43. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* For a very look ye will get this Great Salvation: and do ye ever think to get Heaven at a lower rate?

V. The fifth Consideration, to provock you not to slight this Great Salvation any more, is this, There is not one of you who is a slighter of it, but your slighting of it shal increase your immortal bonds; Man or Woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art slighting this Great Salvation, thou art but plating a cord wherewith to bind thy soul eternally in these unquenchable flames, *Isai. 28. 22. Be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong.* I say therefore unto you, *Old men, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong: Old women, near unto your Graves, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong. Young men, be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. Young women, who are in the flower of your time, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong.* But

now alas, will there (for all this) be a person here to day who will be a mocker of this Great Salvation.

V I. The sixth consideration, to provock you not to slight this Great Salvation any more, is this, Ye know not but that your days may be near a close: I say, ye know not, but the day of the preaching of this Great Salvation may be near a close. What knowest thou, O man or woman, but this shal be the last Sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this Great Salvation? And yet for all this, shal we be sent away without one consent to embrace or receive it? O will ye be perswaded to look to Christ, and so to take him.

VII. The seventh consideration, to provock you not to slight the Great Salvation is this, that there is a five-fold Salvation comprehended under this Great Salvation.

I. The first is this, come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt have salvation from thy Idols: and hereby I do proclaim liberty (this day) unto captives. I am sent forth (this day) with the keys of your Prison-house, to open your prison doors unto you, if ye will embrace this Great Salvation. I say unto you, O ye Prisoners, *come forth and shew your selves*; for the keys of your Prison-house are with us, to open your Prison-doors unto you, therefore O come forth and embrace this Great Salvation. Will there be any (shal I think) here that will refuse to come forth? O! *go forth, and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.*

II. Thou shalt have salvation from thy darkness, and from thy ignorance? I say unto you who understand no more of God than the stones of the wall, I command you to come forth, and partake yet of this Great Salvation; and unto you shal light arise, even the day-spring from on high shal visit you.

III. If ye will come and partake of this Great Salvation, ye shal have deliverance from all your fears. Doeſt thou fear that thou shalt be poor: come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from

from it? Art thou afraid of Hell? come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid of the wrath of God? Then come (I say) and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt have redemption from that, and all thy fears, *with him is plenteous redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.*

IV. If thou wilt come and partake of this Great Salvation, thou shalt have deliverance from all thy anxieties, and from all thy cares; ye are now careful and anxious about many things; come and partake of the Great Salvation, and it will make you careful but only for the *one thing necessary.*

V. If ye will come and imbrace this Great Salvation offered unto you this day, ye shal be helped before ye go hence to sing that Song, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* Now, O will ye come and imbrace this Great Salvation, *And ye shall be more than conquerors thorow Christ who loveth you:* Are there therefore any here to day that would have victory over the Devil, and over their own hearts? Then come and embrace this Great Salvation, and then your victory is certain.

But now to press home this Great Salvation upon you a little further, there are nine sorts of persons, who are invited to come and partake of this Great Salvation offered this day: And I charge you answer to your Names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

I. First, I invite and call here, to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this Great Salvation. Now, are there any of you here to day, who are called *willing?* Then I invite you to come and embrace this Great Salvation, *Rev. 22. 17. Whosoever will, let him come.* But oh, are there none here to day who are named *willing?* I intreat you, if there be any, do not deny your name, but come when ye are called and embrace this Great Salvation.

I I. Secondly, These persons who thirst for it, are invited to come, and partake of this Great Salvation, *Rev. 22. 17. Let him that is athirst come.* Now if there be any here who are named *thirsty*, let them come and partake of this Great Salvation, and they shall be satisfied.

I I I. Thirdly, Are there any Moneyless folk here to day? Let them come and partake of this Great Salvation. Are there no Moneyless folk here to day? I mean not that Money or Coyn in your Purses, but want ye money? That is, want ye righteousness? Then I pray you, come and partake of this Great Salvation. I say, are ye so poor, that ye have nothing but the fear of Hell? Then I pray you come: If there be any here who have nothing to commend them to Christ, but necessity; I say unto all such, *O come, come, come,* and partake of this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, These persons are invited to come, (and I wish there were many such) who are *weary*; But oh! are there none here to day who are called *weary*? Are ye not weary in pursuit of your sins? If there be any such here to day? I say unto you, *O weary folk, come, come, come,* and partake of this Great Salvation, and of this excellent Gospel Redemption that was purchased at so dear a rate.

V. Fifthly, These who are heavy laden, are invited to come, (and I think all of you may answer to this name, are ye *heavy laden*? O then come. But are there none here who are heavy laden with sin, with misery, and estrangement from God? If there be any such here, I say unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, *O come,* and partake of this Great Salvation.

VI. Sixthly, Are there any here to day, who are called blind? I say, if there be any of you who think ye want eyes to see the precious excellencies of Christ, I invite you to come and partake of this Great Salvation.

VII. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to day? I say unto such, *O come, come, come,* and partake of this Great Salvation: For we are sent for to day,

day, to call in the blind and the maimed, and the lame, that they may come and imbrace this Great Salvation: Therefore there are none here to day who may be called such: Are ye neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that ye are such; Therefore I say unto you, *O blind, halt, and maimed, come, come, and partake of this Great Salvation.*

VII. The eight sort of persons invited, are these who are sick, therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who ye will, I say unto you, *O come, and partake of this great salvation, For the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.*

IX. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their name, or their condition, I say unto you, *O nameless folk, come and partake of this Great Salvation, come to Christ for the knowledge of your souls condition, come as a nameless one, and he shal not reject thee, though thy cause were so evil that thou could not give it a name; for, Of all that come unto him he sendeth none away.*

Now where do you find your name and surname? O do ye not know it? I hope you may know it; therefore I intreat you to answer to it, and so come away and partake of this Great Salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron bars in the way of some of you, which ye cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some souls locked in Satans snare? And therefore I shal speak a little for discovering of these bars, that hinder from imbracing this Great Salvation, that so ye may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great Iron bar which keepeth folk from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of Ignorance; and I am afraid, that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you: ye are ignorant of your selves, and of the condition of your souls ye are ignorant of the Law, and of its severity, and ye are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency. O pray unto God, that for Christs sake, he would break that great bar of Ignorance; for till that be done, Christ may take up that complaint, *Jer. 5.*

4. *Surely they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord,*

nor the judgment of their God. I say, this bar of Ignorance keepeth you from embracing this Great Salvation.

II. The second bar which keepeth many from closing with Christ, is the bar of *presumption*, for some will cry out, what need have I to embrace the Great Salvation? Have I it not already? But I say unto thee, O fool, thou art (by all appearance) yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of presumption were put away; for it is one of the greatest impediments which lyeth in the way of your embracing this Great Salvation that is in your offer to day; therefore I say unto you, if you will come no further. I intreat you come this length, to confess that ye want this Gospel Salvation, and that ye are indeed strangers to this Redemption purchased by Christ.

III. The third bar that keepeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of *unbelief*, ye believe not what we say to you anent this great salvation. I know that some of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humour, who cry out, *What meaneth this man? He seemeth to be the setter forth of some strange God.* But I say unto you, I am not the setter forth of any strange God, but it is Jesus of Nazareth whom I preach unto you. Alas, some of you thinketh this great salvation to be some morning dream, or some golden fancy: but I say unto you, it is neither a dream nor fancie; but a real truth that we preach unto you.

I V. The fourth bar that keepeth persons from embracing of this great salvation, is the bar of *discouragement*: This strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot embrace this great salvation though it be freely offered unto them. I shal say no more to you, who are these, but counsel you to do as these four lepers did, *1 Kings 7. 4. Who sat at the gate of Samaria, who said why sit we here till we die? if we say we will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.*

die. Even so say I unto you, that if ye abide in the state of unbelief, ye shal surely be undone; therefore go forth, for ye know not but God may work a great salvation for you, and if ye will quite your unbelief, and close with Christ in the offer of this great salvation (by faith) ye shal have no more to do, but eat and drink, and divide the spoil.

V. The fifth bar which withholdeth persons from imbracing of this great salvation, is the bar of unwillingness, *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* And alas, that is an iron bar indeed by which all that are in hell have barred themselves out of heaven. Alas shal ye be such wretches also. O what a dreadful sound is that, *Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shalt it once be?* Ah, turn you, turn you, why will ye die? Why will ye slight this great salvation? O will none of you this day imbrace it!

VI. The sixth bar that withholdeth persons from imbracing the great salvation, is the bar of worldly mindedness: many of you are so fixed to the world, that ye cannot come and close with this great salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of Saul, *1 Sam. 10. 22.* that he hid himself among the stuff, for many have buried, and nested themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot imbrace this great salvation.

VII. The seventh bar which keepeth many from imbracing this great salvation, is the bar of hard-heartedness; there hath such a stupidity and hardness of heart seized upon many, that let Christ preach as he will to them, (by his Word, or by other dispensations) they are no more moved, than if this Word, or dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of hardness of heart, when shal the Omnipotent hand of God break it.

VIII. The eight bar that hindreth many from imbracing this great salvation, is the bar of sloathfulness, many of you cannot be at the pains to imbrace it: But I say unto you, there is but small pains in the way of Godliness:

I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that it is in your offer to day: and if ye will, ye may put forth your hand, and take it. Consider therefore what ye will: O will ye despise it, I say, will ye still neglect and despise it? Will ye but read that dreadful Word, *Acts 13. 40, 41. Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish.* Tell me, freely, would ye have us to return this answer to him, who sent us, that ye are despisers of this Great Salvation? Say to it, Are there none of you, who (for all this) will consent to partake of this Great Salvation? O captives and prisoners, and ye who are in the bonds of Satan, will ye come, and partake of this Great Salvation, and you shal be made free. I have an act of release for you to day; if ye will come, and make use of it, ye shal be set at liberty. But, Oh, shal the prison doors be cast open, and yet none come forth? But (that I may come to a close) I say unto you, O poor prisoner go forth, go forth, and partake of this Great Salvation. Oh, will ye not come forth? What holdeth you in? The foundation of your prison house is shaken to day, therefore if ye will but come forth, and cast a look to Christ, your very shackles shal fall off your hands and ye shal be as those who were never bound, Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I shal speak these five words unto you, and I intreat you think upon them.

1. First, I have excellent tidings to tell you (I hope some of you will give ear to them) *viz.* There is a great person come here to day, and that is the mighty Author of this great Salvation, who hath brought everlasting righteousness with him, desiring you to make use thereof; it is his desire that ye would take his excellent Gifts at his hand. These, I say, are the Tidings that I have to preach unto you; and I hope never to be declared a liar; for what I preach unto you, I say yet unto you, that Christ, the Author of this Great Salvation, desireth to give it freely unto you, if ye will but take it. But, O will ye not take it? I think, if ye
did

did see an hundred men lying in prison, or dungeon, without all light, bread or water, and a great Prince coming to them, saying, I desire to see you all to come forth, and partake of this great liberty which I bring unto you; and every one of them should answer, *I scorn to come forth at this time*; would ye not think them exceeding great fools? And yet I fear, this act of great folly falls out in many of your hands to day; that when Christ hath given you the keys of your prison doors, and they are opened, ye will not come forth. But I must intreat you yet to come forth and shew your selves; For who knoweth, but we may be commanded to shut your prison doors again, and to seal them with seven seals, with an unalterable decree from Heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye prisoners *go forth, go forth*, from your prison house.

2. Secondly, I would say this to you, that it is not without much ground that this Salvation (offered to you) is called a Great Salvation, I know a little Paper of two or three sheets, might contain all the salvation that ever any man obtained; but the World would not be able to contain all the Books which might be written to the commendation of this Great Salvation; yea, (unto any who will imbrace it) I say first, If thou find not this Great Salvation above thy Faith, then go thy way when thou art come; But I know thou wilt find it both above thy Faith and Hope. Secondly, If thou find it not above thy desires, when thou art come unto it; then go thy way again; but were thy desires as the sand upon the sea shore, thou shalt always find more in this Salvation than ever thou could desire. Thirdly, If this Salvation be not above what thou can conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; But think of it as thou can, it shal always be above thy thoughts of it. Fourthly, If this Salvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way when thou art come unto it: But I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so Great a

Salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the Books might be written in the commendation of it; O will ye imbrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer.

3. Thirdly, I would say this unto you be perswaded, that there is no sin that will more provock the Majesty of God to punish you, than the sin of slighting the Great Salvation, *Bring forth these murdere:s saith the Lord (of the slighers of this invitation) and slay them before me.* I intreat you enquire at your own hearts, what will ye answer when ye are reprov'd for slighting of it? Old mén, will ye alk at your own hearts, what will ye answer to Christ when he shal propose that question to you, Why slighted ye the Great Salvation? Old women, what will ye answer, when he shal say to you, why slighted ye the Great Salvation? Young men, and young women, inquire at your own hearts what ye will answer when Christ shal say to you, Why slighted ye the great salvation? Can ye imagine any answer unto that question? O dreadful shal the wrath of God be, that shal be executed upon the slighers of this great salvation?

4. Fourthly, I would say this unto you, that heaven is waiting to hear, what acceptation the offer of this great salvation doth get among you, here is the great salvation here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it; what say you to it? is it not an excellent salvation? is it not a free salvation? is it not a great salvation? is it not an eternal salvation? Why then do ye not welcome it? can any of you say any thing to the discomendation of it: I know you cannot? Yea, I dare say, your own hearts are admiring it as most excellent; And therefore, O will ye accept it. Alas, shal there be none here who will be found accepters of this great salvation, so freely offered to day?

5. Fifthly, I would say this to you, let all the Angels praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All the Saints round about the Throne, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All these who are expectants

expectants of heaven, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All ye to whom this offer is made, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. O heaven praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation. O all ye fowls of the Air, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. O fire, hail, snow, vapors, stormy winds and tempests, praise him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. All the Tribes of the Earth, praise him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. Our own soul praise him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, and all that is within us bless him, who is the Author of this Great Salvation: O who would not praise him, who is the Author of this Great Salvation? Are there any here that will refuse to commend him? O think upon him, and let not this be a day of flighting him? Now where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the world: but I am sure there are not many of them thinking upon this Great Salvation. Now what resolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh, have ye no resolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to day? Are there any here who have this resolution, *To whom shall we go, but to him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your resolution, that through Christs strength (*for sake him who will*) ye will never for sake him? Or, have ye this resolution, That ye will esteem more highly of the Great Salvation than ever ye did? O that the Lord may keep these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your heart for ever. But as for you who have no resolutions to imbrace this Great Salvation: O where with shal I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if nothing can perswade you to come away and imbrace it, then this place shal be a heap of witnessses against you: *for it hath heard all the words of the law, which he hath spoken unto you, Josh. 24.*

Oh, cast your eyes upon these pillars of the house,
and

and stones of the walls I take them as so many witnesses, that they may speak, and testifie against you in the great day of the Lord if ye neglect this great salvation to day; Therefore as ye go away, be thinking upon it, whether or not ye mind to imbrace it? now while ye may have it. This day I have set life and death before you: I have set before you both the great salvation, and the great damnation; and O that ye had understanding in all these things that ye being wise, might be provoked at last imbrace this great salvation, the which we do yet again intreat you to think upon. Is not heaven looking upon you at this time, to see what ye will do with this great offer of Salvation, which I have this day (from the Lord) presented unto you? Now, to him, that can perswade you to imbrace this great salvation, this Gospel Redemption, this blessed mystery into which the Angels desire to pry, to him, *Who can bring you back from the pit: and enlighten you with the light of the living*; To him who hath the keyes of your prison, *Who can open and none can shut, and can shut and none can open*; To him, *Who hath all power in Heaven and Earth committeth to Him, who can deliver you from the grave, and can set you free from all your enemies*, We desire to give praise. Amen.

S E R M O N II.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THere are two great and most ordinary complaints in these days; 1. There are many who complain, that their Estates and Persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hand of strangers: But, O that we could also turn over the complaint to this, that our souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in *the gall of bitterness*,

bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, that so we might be provoked to long for the great Salvation that is in your offer. 2. There are many complaining (and not without much cause) that there is now such a toleration of Errors: But, O wilt thou complain also of this, that within thy heart there is a toleration of lusts: is there not an act of toleration concluded within thy breast, that the Devil and all his company may reign in thee at pleasure: Oh have ye not need of this great Salvation? Shall I tell you, that Christ is courting you to imbrace it, and that he putteth on all his most glorious robes, and manifesteth himself unto you, as a suiter making offer of himself, and of his great salvation. O tell me, have ye seen him? or do ye think to see him this day? What Robes had he on? There are five glorious Robes wherewith he cloaths himself, when he condescendeth to manifest himself to his people. First, He cometh to his own with the garments of salvation, according to that word, *Zech. 9. ver. 9. Rejoyce O daughter of Sion greatly, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, for behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just, and having salvation; nay, your King is come here to day, and will you not fall in love with him when he is clothed with the Garments of Salvation: Can ye ever have a more conquering sight of Christ, than when he is clothed with such an excellent Robe, and offering you Salvation.* Secondly, He appeareth to his own sometimes in a garment dyed in blood, according to that word, *Isai. 6. ver. 1, 23. Who is this that cometh up from Edom, with dyed garments in blood, as one that treadeth the Wine vat? And now I say to thee that will not look to Christ when he appears in the garments of Salvation, have ye a heart to refuse him, that hath fought such a combat for you, who hath trode the wine press alone, and hath stained all his garments with the blood of his enemies; or is there any here who dare refuse this Salvation, when they see how he treadeth his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury, and thus sprinkleth their blood upon his garments.*

O tremble at this sight, and seek quarters from him in time, or he shal dy his garments with the blood of thy immortal soul. Thirdly, Christ appeareth unto his own, being clothed with these humble Robes of condescendency, when he came in *the similitude of sinful flesh*. O what a sight was that, to behold the Prince of Heaven clothed with our nature? What a sight was that to behold him, that was *clothed with light, as with a garment*, to be clothed with our infirmities? yet he condescended to clothe himself thus, that we might have access unto him, and be partakers of his Gifts: O can we refuse Him, when he hath thus pressed him to put on begger weed, that *he might say to worms, ye are my brethren, and my sisters*. Fourthly, Christ sometimes manifesteth himself, being clothed with the garments of beauty, and ravishing Majesty, such was the sight that the Spouse got of Christ, *Cant. 2. 8. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons*; And Song 5. When she saw him, *white and ruddy, and the standard bearer of ten thousand*, such was that joyful sight of him, when his garments were as the Light, and *white as the snow*, which he had at the Transfiguration, when these glorified ones did come (as it were) Ambassadors from that higher House to make him a visit. And fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth to his own, in Robes of dreadful Majesty, and terrible highness and loftiness, when the soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remains no more life in them; such was the sight that *Daniel* got, in his 10 Chapter, and such was the sight that *John* got of Christ, *Rev. 1. 17*. And I would ask at all that are here, what a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day, in which of all these Robes have ye seen Him in: It is true, we are not now to look for the extraordinary sights of Him; But yet if ever thou hast seen Him in any of his wooing Robes, sure he hath appeared matchless, and how shal ye then refuse Him?

But now to come to the words. I was speaking unto

to you of; The first thing in the words, to wit, That there are many who live under the offer of this Great Salvation, that do slight it, and do not imbrace it; and now I shal only add a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few Considerations to perswade you to imbrace this Great Salvation; God forbid we go away before we imbrace this Gospel Salvation: And therefore, I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye imbrace it. And to press it home upon you, there are these eight or nine Properties of this Great Salvation, that is offered unto you this day.

And first, It is a *free salvation*, ye have no more a do, but to put forth your hand and take it: O come and take it: Christ hath fought for this salvation, and there is no more required of you, but to come and reap the fruits of his Victory; *Who ever will, let him come*, there is nothing that should move you to stay away, *O captives, bound slaves to Satan, O prisoners of hope*, will ye come and partake of the Great Salvation, what holds you from coming away and partaking of it? It is freely offered unto you, ay, believe it, Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand; *If ye consent to obey*, the bargain is ended; *Ye shall eat the good of the land*, *Isai. 1.*

Secondly, This Great Salvation is a compleat Salvation, that is offered unto you to day, this is clear, *Luke 1. ver. 71. That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*, there is not any enemy that is in thy way, but if thou wilt come and partake of the great Salvation, thou may have victory over it, so compleat a Salvation it is, that is in your offer this day; O shal we pass away and not imbrace it: O shal your cursed hearts undervalue this compleat Salvation that is come to your door? believe it, *Salvation is near unto you*, if ye will take it.

Thirdly, It is a *wonderful salvation*, it is such a Salvation as the Angels desireth to pry into it, and it is such

a salvation, that all the Prophets desire to pry into it; it is almost six thousand years since all the Angels in Heaven fell into a Sea of wonder at this great Salvation; It is almost six thousand years since *Abel* fell into a Sea of wonder at this great Salvation: And what think ye is his exercise this day? He is even wondring at this great Salvation; Would ye ask at all the Angels in Heaven, would they not all say, O imbrace the great Salvation; Would ye ask at all the saints that are above, would they not advise you to imbrace the great Salvation; Would ye ask at *Adam*, would he not say, O imbrace this great Salvation; Would ye ask at *Abel*, would he not say, O imbrace this great Salvation; And would not all the Patriarchs say unto you, O imbrace this great Salvation; And do not all that have tasted of the Sweetness of it, cry out unto you, *Come and imbrace the great Salvation.*

The fourth property of this Salvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate, it is a dear Salvation. Would ye know the difference between Christs coming to this salvation, and your coming to it, it is this, Christ was forced to travel through all the armies of the Justice of God; He was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, before he could come to purchase this great Salvation; And now what is required of you to obtain this, we may say no more, but put out your hands and take it; will ye look to the price that was laid down for this Salvation, there is not a wound in the Body of Christ, but it saith, *This is a dear Salvation*; There is not a reproach Christ met with, but it saith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*? There is not a buffeting Christ met with, but it saith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*? There is not a necessity that he is put into, but it saith, *Is not this a great and dear Salvation*? O Sirs, will ye not come and take this great Salvation, this dear Salvation, What must I give for it say ye? I say, ye must give nothing for it, *come and take it, without money and without price*;

price; it was dear to Christ, but it shal be cheap unto you. O! is it not cheap to you? I assure you, if you will come to the Mercat to buy the great Salvation, there is none of you that needeth to stand for the price of it. O come and take it, and have it, and there shal be no more priggings.

Fifthly, It is an everlasting Salvation, that ye shal enjoy the Fruits of throughout eternity, as is clear, *Heb. 9. 13. He became the Author of eternal Redemption unto us.* It is a Salvation that the Devil can never be able to take out of your hand, if ye take it, ye shal never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this great salvation whereby the gates of hell shal never prevail against you.

Sixthly, It is a noble and honourable Salvation, it is not to be taken out of one slavery to another, but it is to be taken out of prison, *that we may reign, Luk. 1. v. 71. compared with v. 74. It is, That we being saved, may serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.* I say, Come, come, and partake of this great Salvation, that your glory may be increased, and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the Earth.

Seventhly, It is a most advantagious Salvation: What are the advantages of any Salvation, that are not to be found in this? Is there no peace to be found through this Salvation? Is there no liberty to be found through this Salvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this Salvation? yea all salvations are in this one Salvation.

Lastly, It is a Royal Salvation, for it cometh to us from, and through the Son of God: Christ is the Author of it, and we conceive, Christ may be said to be the Author of this salvation, in these respects, 1. He is the meritorious cause that did procure it, it was the price of his blood that was laid down for it to purchase this Great Salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence

whence it floweth, according to that word which we have cited, *Heb. 5. 9. He became the Author of eternal salvation.* 3. He is the person that sitteth our Spirits for partaking of it, and it is he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair access unto the Great Salvation. 4. It is he that must perswade our hearts to imbrace and take hold of it. He standeth without and cryeth in to the heart to imbrace this Great Salvation; And he standeth within making the heart cry out *content*, I will imbrace the Great Salvation; He is indeed the person that commendeth, and doth point forth this Great Salvation unto us. He is the noble Minister of it, it began first to be preached by Him.

Now, Is there any of you that hath fallen in love with this great salvation; that ye may try your selves, I shall give you some evidences of the persons that are near unto this Great Salvation. Is thy *estimation* of the Great Salvation increased by what it was in the morning when thou came hither? Is thy estimation of the great Gospel Salvation a foot higher than it was in the morning; I say unto thee, thou art not far from the Great Salvation, Come away. 2. Is thy desire after the Great Salvation increased by what it was in the morning? Hast thou stronger desires after the Great Salvation, than before thou came hither? that is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. Is thy *thoughts* of thy *necessity* of the Great Salvation greater than they were? Thinkest thou that thou hast more need of the Great Salvation than ever thou thoughtest before? And is thy opinion and thoughts of saving thy self, less than they were before thou camest hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *none but Christ can save me?* I say thou art not far from the Great Salvation; Wilt thou come away. O that ye would once seal this conclusion with much heart perswasion, *I am undone without Christ, I am undone without Christ*, who is the Author of this Great Salvation. Are there any of you that are sensible that ye are in the fetters of sin, and in the bonds of

of iniquity? Are ye brought to the conviction of this, that ye are in the gall of bitterness? I say, if thou be brought to this length, to be sensible of thy bonds, and art crying out, *O Redeemer, hasten and come away*; I say, If thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonment, and crying out, *O thou that was anointed from eternity, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*. O hasten and come away and redeem me, even poor me, sinking, sinking, perishing, self-destroying me, thou art not far from the Great Salvation. 4. Art thou a person who beginneth to weep, because thou hast been so long a stranger to Christ, & the Great Salvation; Old men that are here, how long have ye been strangers to the Great Salvation, and to the Author of it? Now will ye shed one tear for your estrangements, and cry out, *Who is me that Christ and I have been so long asunder*; I say, if thou hast come that length, thou art not far from the Great Salvation, *come away*; O pity your selves, make haste, make haste, and *come away*.

But now in the third place, let me give you some evidences by which ye may know more clearly, whether or no ye have imbraced *this Great Salvation*, that ye may know your selves, and that ye walk not down to your Grave with a lie in your right hand. The first evidence of a person that hath imbraced the Great Salvation, is, that he will have an high esteem of the Saviour and Author of the Great Salvation; Hast thou a matchless esteem of matchless Christ, the Saviour of the world? that is a speaking evidence unto thee, thou art a partaker of the great salvation; Art thou come this length, that thou cryest out, *none but Christ, none but Christ*, it is a speaking evidence, that thou art come to be a partaker of the Great Salvation, when thou can cry out that word, *Exod. 15. 1. The Lord is my strength and my song, he alone is become my salvation*; If Christ hath become thy salvation, then it is like he hath become thy song. I would ask this at you, were ye ever brought

brought this length, that you durst never adventure to praise Christ your alone, but was forced to call all the creatures and say, *O magnifie the Lord with me? O that is an evidence, that ye have imbraced this Salvation.*

Secondly, These who have imbraced the great Salvation, will study to maintain and keep their grips of it; they will study to hold fast so precious a Jewel, this is prest, *Gal. 3. 1. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.* Yea, they will study to walk suitable to this noble mercy, at least, they will strive and endeavour to do it, as is also prest, in that same verse, I say, if thou hast been made a partaker of the Gospel of Salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thy self from the power of these things that once triumphed over thee.

Thirdly, A person that is a partaker of the great Salvation, will have a high esteem of this mercy and Salvation; So *Paul*, when he speaketh of it here, he cannot but put some note of excellency to it, calling it the *Great Salvation*; Therefore I say, if thou hast imbraced the great Salvation, thou wilt have so high esteem of it, that not to be subjected to it as thou should, or to be in-subjection to the power of thy lust in any measure, will be his burden and affliction. The man will be sorry when he is brought forth from the house of bondage, unto the red Sea; he will be sorry, that when he should have songs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they should sing songs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, A person that hath imbraced the great Salvation, he will be longing sometimes for the day when this Salvation shall be compleat, when he shall sing that song, with that *numerous multitude, which cannot be numbred, Rev. 7. 9.* O what a day shall it be when thou shalt begin to sing that song. After this (saith he) *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all people, nations and languages, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,*
cloathed

cloathed with white robes and palms in their hands, and they cryed: and how cryed they? They cryed with a loud voice. They would not mutter the song, nor sing silently, but cryed with a loud voice, and what did they cry? They cryed with a loud voice, *Salvation unto our God, who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* I would only ask you that are partakers of the great Salvation, what songs shal be put into thy mouth, when the waters of *Jordan* shal divide themselves, *That the ransomed of the Lord must pass thorow?* When thou shalt sing that Song, *Psal. 115, 1. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongs the glory of our salvation:* O what a day shal that be, when that excellent song shal be put in thy mouth? Yea, What a day shal it be, when thou shalt be cloathed with these excellent garments, that are made mention of, *Ijai. 6. verse 10.* For he hath cloathed thee with the garments of *salvation*, and he hath covered thee with the robes of *righteousness*: O what robes are these? Did ye ever see such excellent robes as these must be? I think we will misken our selves. O do ye not think we will misken our selves, when we shal put on these excellent robes? Now therefore is the bargain closed: Or will ye go away before ye take this great Salvation? Dare ye go out at these doors, and neglect the great Salvation? I would ask this at you, Think ye it will not be most sad, that Christ should tell this in Heaven of you to Night, I was preaching to a pack of stones, that none of them would love me: Will ye not be feared that this report shal be carried back to Heaven of you? For what report can Christ carry back but this? Now is the cord of this great Salvation let down unto you, is there none of you that will take a grip of it? O will ye flighter after it! will ye make this a rejoycing day in heaven, that is a fasting day unto you, and the way to make it so, is to imbrace the great Salvation. Now what say ye to it old men, let me speak to you, and ask your thoughts of the great salvation, gray hairs should be

be a Crown of Glory, if they be found in the way of righteousness, old men speak your minds, that young men may not have your bad example, what say ye of this salvation? Is it not a most glorious Salvation? Is it not a most excellent Salvation that is in your offer? I intreat you speak your minds, tell Christ ye are content to take the Great Salvation; otherwise, whoever he be that will not partake of this Gospel Salvation, I, in the Name and Authority of Christ our Master, denounce eternal and irrevocable war against him, put on your harness, ye shal not boast when ye put it off again, the wrath and fury of God shal come upon thee to the uttermost, if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation. Other wars are but for a time; the greatest Captains that ever the earth did carry, are now *laid down in the sides of the pit, and their swords broken under their heads.* Armies of ten hundred thousand, a hundred years time have laid them all in their Graves, and ended all their contests, but there is no discharge of this war, that shal be concluded betwixt Christ and you, it shal become an eternal and most terrible war, which shal be but beginning when time is ended; Now Peace or War, which of them will ye choise? Dare ye send a charge to Christ, and say that ye will defy him? I am afraid there shal be two things that many of us shal report to day: First, I am afraid there will be many that will give *Pharaohs* reports to the offer of the Great Salvation, and say, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him?* I tell you who he is, He is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.* O imbrace him before he go hence, and give not *Pharaohs* report, lest ye be drowned in the sea of his wrath, whence there shal be no recovery. Secondly, I fear there will be many here to day, that will give *Demas* report to this precious offer; I will go and forsake Christ, and imbrace this present world; O bad exchange; cursed be he that shal make it, will ye be of *Demas* humour? I fear there hath been many of that humour of a long time; but I

intreat

intreat you once to be wise before you die. I confess that proverb, old fools are twice fools; I think old men that will not imbrace this Great Salvation, I think they are triple fools; what wait ye for, is there any thing can afford you any satisfaction but this Great Salvation? Now are ye convinced old men, that Christ is waiting for your answer: I intreat you before ye go hence, speak your minds, what ye think of the Great Salvation? is it not a lovely Salvation? is it not lovely now? What say ye to it? I am to go away, and the offer is to be taken up at this time, and it is hard to say, if ever ye shal have an offer again. I would only say this to you, and be sure of it, though I should never be a partaker of this Great Salvation, yet I shal be a witness against you that are not partakers of it: I tell and declare unto you, I shal be a witness against you, if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation. Now old men are ye perswaded to imbrace it? Let me obtest you *by the beauty of Christ*, come and partake of the Great Salvation, ye that are travelling upon the borders of eternity. Now if ye will give no more, give this, will ye go home and think upon it, I shal not be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts; I fear there will be many declared and found guilty among us, that we have declared unto heaven we will not imbrace the Great Salvation, but have trode the blood of the *Son of God under foot*. Now I intreat you, every one of you, ask at your selves if ye be the persons that will *presume in your heart to do so*. Now I shal leave it with you, let it not be a witness against you: I shal leave it with this: O come away, old men, young men, old women, and maids, come and imbrace this precious Gospel Salvation. Ye may say, ye bid us come, but we cannot come. I desire no more of you but to come with this, Lord I am content to come, but I cannot come. Come once to that: for if once ye be content to receive it, it will not be long before ye be able to receive it. Now shal Christ depart, and will none of you say, ye are content

A Sermon

tent to take him? Will ye charge your own Consciences with this: Am I content to take Christ and the Great Salvation? O blest, blest, blest be he that is the Author of this Great Salvation: and blest be he that gets any of the ends of the cords of the Great Salvation, that he sink not under the wrath and fury of the Lord. Come and imbrace this Great Salvation: and again I say, come and imbrace it; for what can ye have if ye want it? and what can ye want if ye have it? I shal say no more, but close with that word, *Isai. 62. 2.* Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the ends of the world, to those that are far off? what hath he proclaimed? Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh, behold it cometh: I say unto you that are the ends of the world, salvation is brought near unto you: stout hearted and far from righteousness, the great Salvation is brought near unto you, and will you send it away? O consider what ye are doing: And to him that can perswade you to imbrace this great salvation, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON Concerning DEATH.

Psal. 89. 48. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death, &c.

IT is very hard to determine, where all that are here shal be within thirty years; for even ere that time come, many (if not all) of us who are here shal have taken up our everlasting lodging. And whether we shal take it up in the eternity of joy, or in the eternity of pain, is also hard to determine, only this one thing I am sure of, that all of us shal shortly be gone: *And ere long the shadows of death shall be sitting upon our eye-lids, and our eye-strings shall begin to break.* Therefore I would the more seriously inquire at you, what would you think if Death were approaching this night unto you? Think ye that Jesus Christ is gone up to prepare

prepare a place for you? even for you? Surely I think we are all near to eternity, and there are some hearing me to day, whom I defy the whole world to assure, that ever they shal hear another Sermon; Therefore I intreat you all to hear this preaching, as if it were the last preaching, that ever ye should hear, and O that we could speak it, as if it were the last Sermon that ever we would preach unto you. Believe me, death is another thing than we take it to be; *Oh, what will many of us do in the day of our visitation, when desolation shall come from a far? where will we flee for rest; and where will we leave our glory?* Old rich men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old poor men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old women, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Young women, where will ye flee when death assaults you? It was an ancient observation of David, *Psal. 39. 5.* That God had made his days as an hand breadth; this either may relate to the four-fold estate of man, viz. his infancy, his childhood, his man-hood, and his old age. Or it may relate to the four-fold time of his life, viz. his morning, his forenoon, his afternoon, and his evening, yet all our lifetime is but a day. And O think ye not that our day is near unto a close.

Now before that I begin to speak any thing from the words, I shal speak a few things to these two questions, which I conceive, may not altogether be unprofitable.

Quest. 1. Whether is it lawful for any to desire to die, and to return unto their long and endless home? whether it be lawful for one to cry out, *O time, time flee away (and all my shadows let them be gone)* that so long eternity may come?

Ans. I say, it is lawful in some cases for one to desire to die: for it was Pauls desire, *Phil. 1. 23.* *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* And *2 Cor. 5. 2.* *We groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house which*

is far better. I long greatly till the twentieth one year of my age come, when my minority shall be overpast, that I may be entered heir to that matchless inheritance. But to clear in what cases it is lawful to desire to die.

1. I say, it is lawful to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire of uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Christ and conjunction with him, this is clear, 2 Cor. 5. 6. *Knowing that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* Therefore, ver. 8. *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Also it is clear, Philip. 1. 23. *I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and so be with Christ which is far better.* It was his great end to have near and unmixed communion with Christ. What aileth you Paul (might one have said) may ye not be content to stay a while here? Nay saith Paul, *I desire to be gone, and to be with Christ.* Wast thou never with him here, Paul? I have been with him, saith he; but what is all my being with him here, in comparison of my being with him above, *While I am present in the body, I am but absent from the Lord;* Therefore I can never be at rest, saith he, get what I will, until I get Christ, until I get those naked and immediat embracements of that noble Plant of Renown, the Flower of the stock of Jesse, who is the light of the higher house, the eternal admiration of Angels.

2. It is lawful to desire to die when it floweth from the excellencies of Heaven, from a desire to partake of those excellent things that are there, this is clear, 2 Cor. 5. 4. *We groan, being burdened;* or as the word is, *We groan as they who are pressed under a heavy burden, that we may be clothed upon,* &c. What aileth you to groan so Paul? O saith he, *I groan that mortality may be swallowed up of life.*

3. It is lawful to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire to be freed from the body of death; and from such temptations that do assault us; and from these oppression

pressions whereunto we are subject by it. Doubtless, Paul desired to die on his account, when he cryed out, *Rom. 7. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He longeth greatly for that day, *Wherein he should be made white like the wings of a Dove, covered with silver, whose feathers are of yellow gold.* O saith Paul, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I shal be clothed with these excellent and cleanly Robes; *The righteousness of Christ.* Oh, saith Paul, I think every day a year, till I be possessed of that kingdom where Satan cannot tempt, and the creature cannot yield, and where I shal be free from all my fears of sinning. Now in all these respects, who would not desire to die? But to guard all these, I would give you these four Cautions;

1. *Caut.* Your desire to die should not be peremptory, but ye should desire to die with submission to the will of God, so that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, ye should be content to live it out.

2. *Caut.* When your desires are hasty, and off hand, suspect them; for some when they meet with an outward cross (without all deliberation) will cry out, *O to be gone, O that I were dead.* But your desire to die should be deliberat, but not hastily or rash.

3. *Caut.* It is not lawful to desire to die, because of personal afflictions. Many, when they meet with bitter afflictions, will cry out, *O to be gone;* They long for death even upon that account, such were *Jobs* desires, *Job 21. 22, and Chap. 6. ver. 8, 9. O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me.* This desire was very unlawful.

4. *Caut.* It is not lawful to desire to die, when thy predominant Idol is taken away from thee, yet such was *Jonahs* desire, *Chap. 4. 23. Jonah* thought his credit and reputation (which was his idol) was gone, and could never be re-gained; therefore he wished to

die. But I would say this to you, that some will have ten desires for death, when they have not one desire for heaven. And what moveth Christians to be so desirous to die? It is not so much because of their hope, as because of their anxiety; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But I say unto you, when your desires of death are not accompanied with desires of heaven, suspect them.

2. I would say this, that there are some who will have ten desires for death, when they will not have one for the death of the body of death; but it were good for thee (who are such), to be desiring the death of the body of death, then should thou be in a more suitable frame to desire to die.

3. Some will have hearty desires to die, and yet when death cometh, they will be as unwilling to die as any, it hath been observed, that some who have much desired to die, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little, that I may recover strength, &c.*

4. There is a great difference between a desire to die, and death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to die, but it is a very great business to meet with death, and to look it in the face when it cometh. We think death (ere it come near us) to be but childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts, for it is a great business to die.

Quest: 2: Is it lawful for a Christian to desire to live, when he is summoned to die?

Ans. In some cases it is lawful for a Christian to desire to live, even when he is summoned to die; which is clear from the practice of David, *Psal:39:13:* where he prayeth, *That the Lord would spare him a little.* It is also clear from the practice of good *Hezekiah, Isai:38:3:* when he was commanded to set his house in order, for he should die, and not live, he cryeth forth, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart: and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore,* Or as the word in the

the Original, *he wept with great weeping*: but to guard this, take these two *Cautions*.

Caution 5. Thy desires to live (when thou art summoned to die) should not be peremptory, but with submission to the will of God, that if it be his pleasure to remove thee presently out of time, thou should be content to die.

Caution 2. Thy desires to live should have gracious principles, and also a very gracious end, as is most clear from David, *Psal: 39: 13*: where he saith, *O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go from hence, and be no more*: his desire to live was, that he might have victory over his idols, as if he had said, my desire to live is, that I may have strength to wrestle with, and overcome my Idols; and without all controversie, *Hezekiahs* desire was a most precious and well grounded desire. However, I would say this unto thee, that thou shouldst examine thy desires to live, as much, (if not more) as thy desires to die; for we are ready to shun death if we could, but he is that universal King, unto whom all of us must be subject ere long.

Now in the words which are read unto you, there are these six things, which may be clearly observed from them.

I. First, That it is a most clear and infallible Truth, that all persons shal once see death, as is clear in these words, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

II. Secondly, That this Truth (that we shal once see death) is not much believed or thought upon by many, therefore it is that the Psalmist doubleth the Assertion, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul (that is his life) from the hand (that is) from the power of the grave.*

III. Thirdly, That sometimes a Christian may win to the solid Faith of this Truth, that once he must die, this the Psalmist wan unto, as it is also clear in that word (who) *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

IV. Fourthly, That the certainty of this, that once we shall die, should be still kept in our mind, therefore that note of attention, *Selah*, is put to it, as if he had said, take heed, that there is none living that shall not die.

V. Fifthly, That howbeit some persons put the evil day far away, as if they were not to see death, yet is the day coming when they shall see death, and death shall take them by the hand.

VI. Sixthly, We shall take notice of this from the Context, that the Christian who is much in minding the brevity of his life, will believe the certainty of his death: the Psalmist was speaking of the shortness of his life in the preceeding verse, and in this verse, he speaketh of the certainty of death.

Now as for the first of these things observed, *viz.* That it is certain and most sure, that we must all once die: I hope there are none of you here who will deny, although I confess some few of you believe, that yet said the woman of Tekoah, 2 Sam. 14. 14. *We must all die, and be like water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again: God doth not accept the person of any.* And Job 30. 23. *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* And it is very clear, Eccles. 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he any power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.* It is clear, Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed unto all men once to die.* So that it is most clear that we must die. I remember of one Philip, King of Macedonia, who had one substitute for this very end, to cry at his Chamber-door every morning, *Memento mori, memento mori, memento mori*: Remember thou art to die. And it is reported to have been the practice of the Nobles of Greece, and in the day wherein their Emperour was crowned, that they presented a Marble-stone unto him, and he was enquired after what fashion he would have his Tomb-stone

stone made? Which practice speaks forth this unto us, that although these were most destitute of the Light of the Scriptures, they were very mindful of death. Believe me, Death may surprise us before we be aware; for it is most certain that we must die; but there is nothing more uncertain than the way how, and the time when we shal die.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel*, in the open fields, *Gen. 4. 8.* Death will surprise some, as it did *Eglon* in his Parlour, *Judges 3. 21.* And Death will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan*, in the flight, *1 Sam. 31.*

Now in speaking to this point, I shal first speak a little to these advantages which attend those that live within continual sight of Death. Secondly, I shal give you some Considerations to pers. you to prepare for Death. Thirdly, I shal give you some Directions to help you to prepare for Death: And when we shal proceed unto the second point of Doctrine, which we observed from the Text, and I shal speak a few things from it unto you, and so come to a close for this time.

First then, we conceive there are these seven advantages which attend those who live within the continual sight of this truth, that they must die.

I. First, The Faith of approaching death will make a soul exceeding diligent in duty: this was our blessed Lords Divinity, *Joh. 9. 4. I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh, when no man can work:* That is, death is approaching, therefore I must work. It is clear also, *2 Pet. 1. 12. compared with ver. 14. In the 12. ver. Peter is exceeding diligent in his duty, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. ver. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, &c.* Yet it is even the Epicures argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die?* and should not the Christian much more cry out, *Let us watch and pray, for to morrow I may die?* I say, If the

Epicures did make use of this notion, to make them vigorous in the pursuit of their pleasures: O how much more should a Christian improve it, for making him vigorous in the pursuit of his duty? Therefore I say unto you all, O be ye diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Christians, and expectants of Heaven, are ye not afraid lest ye be nighted before ye have walked the half of your journey? For if ye be nighted on your journey to Heaven, before ye come to the end of your race, there is no retiring place whereunto ye may turn aside to lodge: therefore, *O work, work, work, while it is to day*, for behold death is approaching, and then shal we all be called to an account.

II. The Faith of approaching death, will make a Christian exceeding active in duty, he will not only be diligent, but also exceeding serious, and zealous in the exercise of his duty: This is clear from that notable exhortation, *Eccel: 9: 10; Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*: and the reason is, *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest*. Wherefore, O be active while ye are alive, for ye shal never work any more after ye are dead; and if ye leave but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death. There is no work (saith Solomon) in the grave; therefore, O be active.

III. The faith of this truth, that we must all die, will help a Christian to be exceeding mortified to the things of a present world. Oh, covetous men and women, would ye shake hands with cold death but once every morning, I should defy you to pursue the world so much as ye do; Paul was much in the meditation of his change, which made him, *2 Cor: 1: 18*: to overlook these things that are temporary, *while we look not*, (saith he) *to the things that are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal*, therefore, *Chap: 5: 1*: *Knowing, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house*

house not made with hands, aternal in in the heavens: Therefore in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. What aileth you Paul (might one have said) may ye not take a look of the world? no, saith he; For I know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a house with God, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. That is, I know, that ere long, the pins of my tabernacle will be loosed, and it will fall down about my ears; therefore I must look for another dwelling-house: And, 1 Cor. 7: 24: *The fashion of this world passeth away. Therefore saith he, ver: 32: I would have you without carefulness, caring how to please the Lord.* And Phil. 4: 5: *Let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand.* As if he had said, Death is approaching and at hand, therefore I intreat you be sober: But I think many of us will be found like Saul, hid among the stuff, that is, we will be lying amongst the midst of the pleasures of this passing world, But I say unto thee who are such an one, that death will break the strings of thy harp, thy musick will quickly cease. O but death will make thee have a low esteem of the world. O blessed is the person who hath these thoughts of the world all along his way, which he shal have of it at death! have not the most curied wretches been forced to cry forth, *Oh, I would give ten thousands worlds for Christ?* have not some persons (who have had the Moon upon their head, and that have made their belly their god) been forced to cry forth at death, *O curied person that I am, that ever made the world my god?* Alas that I contented my self with the world. Therefore I say unto thee who art such an one, O stay thy pursuit after the world, for death is approaching that will cause all thy worldly comforts evanish.

IV. When a Christian believeth this truth, that he must die, it will be an exceeding great restraint to keep him from sinning, as is clear, Job 31. 13. compared with v. 14. where Job reckoning over many good deeds done by

himself, saith, *What then shall I do when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?* As if he had said, Sirs, mistake me not, I am not boasting much of my self, for I could not have done otherwise, else what should I do when God riseth up? how could I answer to God if I had done otherwise? I think it were a notable practice of each of you, to say, *O temptation; what will I answer to God, when he riseth up, to reprove me, if I should yield unto thee?* Likewise, Eccles. 11. 9. where Solomon dissuading young men to pursue after their vanity, bringeth this as a reason, *Know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment;* Therefore I say unto thee, who art often tempted to sin, let death and reckoning with God be still in thy sight, and I defy thee then to imbrace half so many temptations as now thou doest. I intreat you to answer all your temptations with that word, *What shall I do when he riseth up? and what shall I answer when he visiteth me?*

V. When a Christian liveth within the sight of this Truth, that he shal once see death, it will make him exceeding patient under every cross wherewith he meeteth. Such a Christian will hardly meet with a cross, but he will quiet himself with this, Death will put me beyond this cross: this is but a cloud that will quickly pass away. And for this cause did David so composedly put up that desire, Psal. 39. 4. *Lord make me to know my end, and the measure of my days:* He was sure that the knowledge of his end would put him in a sober and patient frame.

VI. The sixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death, will teach the person that hath it, to study saving wisdom: This is clear, Ps. 90. 12. Where David putteth up his request, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* As if he had said, I will never think my self wise, till I know that blessed piece of Arithmetick, *how to number my days.* I would desire every one of you all to think with your self every morning when you rise, now I am a day nearer unto eternity

eternity that I was before: and at the end of every hour, now I am an hour nearer unto eternity than I was before; I say, think often, ye always thus, I was never so near my death as I am now; For, Oh! are we not all nearer unto eternity to day, than we were yesterday?

VII. The seventh advantage, attending the faith of approaching Death, is this, That it will make a Christian very careful in preparing for Death. It is impossible for one to believe really that death is approaching, and not to prepare for it. Say what ye will, if ye be not careful in preparing for death, ye have not the solid faith of this truth, that ye shal die. Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth, that believeth it indeed. And O how dreadful is it for an unprepared man to meet with death? He desireth not to die, yea, he would give a world for his life: But die he must, whether he will or not: for death will not be requested, to spare a little when he cometh. And therefore I say unto you all, *Set your house in order, for ye shall surely die; Old men and women, set your house in order, for to morrow ye may die, and be cut off in the flower of your age.* Think not that there be any who can sell time: for I say, ye shal never get time sold unto you. Alas, I fear that the most part of persons that die now, death findeth them at unawares; for indeed the persons that die amongst us, when we come to visit them, we may give you a sad account of them, for we think they are comprehended under these four sorts.

I. First, When we go to visit some persons on their Death-bed, they are like unto Nabal, *their heart is dying and sinking (like unto a stone) within them;* they are no more affected with death, then if it were a fancy; alas, for the great stupidity that hath overtaken many; Therefore I intreat you delay not your repentance till death, lest the Lord take away your wit, so that ye cannot repent for your *sin*. Death will find much love to

2. A second sort we find in a presumptuous frame, saying, They have had a good hope all their days, and they will not quite it now; they will go down to the grave with their hope in their right hand, or rather they will go down to the grave *with a lie in their right hand*; they live in a presumptuous frame, and they die in the same delusion. For when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell, they answer, God forbid, I was all my time a very honest man, or woman: But I love not that confession, for there are many such honest men and women in hell this day.

3. The third sort we find, having some convictions that they have been playing the fool all their days; but we can get them no further; I shal only say to such, to go down to the grave with convictions in their breast, not making use of Christ, is to go down to hell with a candle in their hand, to let them see the way; and truly the greatest part that die, die in this manner.

4. Fourthly, There are some whom we find in a self-righteous frame, resting upon the Covenant of Works and their own merits, and trusting by these, to go to Heaven; yet neglecting the offer of Christs righteousness. But, alas, we find not one of a thousand in this frame, *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, that's best of all*: And scarce do we find any in such a frame, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death*? Therefore I say unto you all who are here, O will ye mind death before it take hold on you. Oh mind your work now; for ye will find that death will be work enough for it self, though ye leave no work till then.

VIII. The eight advantage that attendeth the Christian in believing this truth, that once he must die, is this, death will not be so terrible to him as it is unto many when it cometh. What (think ye) maketh death a desire ~~every~~ ^{to many}? What maketh many to shake like the reed in the storm when they are summoned to appear before the ~~judgment~~ ^{judgment}? It is even because of this, they have

have not been thinking on death before it came, so as to prepare for it, and I fear many in this place may be feared for death, and that when it cometh to them, they will say unto death, as *Ahab* said to *Elijah*, *Hasst thou found me, O mine enemy?* Surely, death will take you, and bring you to the Judgment-seat of Christ; Therefore study by all means to think often upon it; and make ready for it; (believe me) death is a very big word, for it will once make you stand with horror in your souls, if your peace be not made up with God; I know not a more dreadful dispensation than death and a guilty conscience meeting together.

The second thing that I shal speak unto from this first observation (*viz. This is a most certain and infallible truth, that all persons shall once see death*) shal be to give you some considerations for pressing you to prepare for death.

I. The first consideration is this, *To die well, and in the Lord*, is a most difficult work; therefore I intreat you to prepare for death. It is a difficult work to communicat aright, it is a difficult work to pray aright, and it is a difficult work to confer aright; But I must tell you, it is a more difficult work to die aright, than any of these. It is true, it is more difficult to communicat aright, than to pray aright, yet it is much more difficult to die aright than to communicat aright. For it is a more difficult work to die in the Lord. Death will put the most accurat Christian that is here to a wonderful search; and therefore I will tell you nine things that death will try in thee. 1. Death will try both the reality and strength of thy Faith. It may be easie for thee to keep up Faith under many difficulties, but death shal put thy Faith to the greatest stress that ever it did meet with. Yea, know this, that the faith of the strongest believer may get (and ordinarily doth get) a set at death, the like whereof it never got before, therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy love to God; some persons pretend much love

to him, but death will propose this question to such a person, *Lovest thou him more than these? Lovest thou him more than thy wife? more than thy house? more than thy friends?* But your unwillingness to die giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the world, and so dare not answer the question, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee.* 2. Death will try thine enjoyments, some of you may be ready to think that ye meet with many enjoyments, so that ye might reckon (as you think) to forty enjoyments and sweet out-lettings; but beware that death bring them not down to twenty. I have known some, who thought they have met forty times with God, but when death came, it made them take down the count to the half; therefore seeing death will try the reality of thine enjoyments, O prepare for it. 4. Death will try thy patience. Thou may seem to have much patience now, but when death cometh (and thou art put to die) it will put thy patience to a great tryal, therefore prepare for it. 5. Death will try the reality of thy duties, yea even these duties wherein thou had most satisfaction, as thy communicating aright in such a place, thou hopest that is sure: thy reading the Scripture at such a time aright, thou hopest that is sure; thou prayed at such a time aright, and hopest that is sure; thou meditated in such a place aright, and hopest that is sure. But (believe me) death may make thee change thy thoughts; for there are some persons who have communicated, and prayed, &c. as right as any in this generation, who (for all that) will not find six duties wherein they can find satisfaction at death; Therefore our need is great to prepare for it. 6. Death will exceedingly try thy sincerity when it cometh; An hypocrite may go all along his whole way undiscovered, yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear what man he is. 7. Death will discover unto thee many hid and secret sins, of which thou never had a thought before, yea, albeit thou thought

concerning Death.

thought these had been forgotten, death will see them standing between thee and the light countenance. 8. Death will accurately try thy mortification, some will think they have come a great length in Mortification; but (believe me) death will try it, and put it to the Touch-stone. 9. Death will try thy hope, whether it be real or not. I shal only say this, that all the other graces must low the sail to Faith, and so it is Faith must carry us thorow, being that last triumphing grace, which must fir the field for us, when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is Faith that must enter us fairly within the borders of eternity; It is Faith must gainstand all the Temptations of death, yea, all the other graces must (as it were) stand by, and see Faith strike the last stroak in the War.

I I. The second consideration to press you to mind death, is this, that ye are to die but once, and the wrong doing of which can never be helped. If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended; if ye meditate not aright, ye may get that mended, and if ye communicate not aright, ye may get that mended; but alas, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that; Therefore, O prepare for death, that ye may die well, seing ye are to die but once.

I I I. The third consideration to press you to mind death, is this, That they are pronounced blessed who die in the Lord, *Rev. 14. 12. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* O let that provock you to prepare for death, that so you may die in the Lord, that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confess it is a question difficult to determine, whether it be more difficult to die well, or to live well; I shal not answer it, but rather desire you to study both.

I V. The fourth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That though thou put all thy work by thy hand before death, yet shalt thou find that death shal have work enough for it self, yea, as much

to him, but death will propose this question to such a person, *Lovest thou him more than these? Lovest thou him more than thy wife? more than thy house? more than thy friends?* But your unwillingness to die giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the world, and so dare not answer the question, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee.* 2. Death will try thine enjoyments, some of you may be ready to think that ye meet with many enjoyments, so that ye might reckon (as you think) to forty enjoyments and sweet out-lettings; but beware that death bring them not down to twenty. I have known some, who thought they have met forty times with God, but when death came, it made them take down the count to the half; therefore seeing death will try the reality of thine enjoyments, O prepare for it. 4. Death will try thy patience. Thou may seem to have much patience now, but when death cometh (and thou art put to die) it will put thy patience to a great tryal, therefore prepare for it. 5. Death will try the reality of thy duties, yea even these duties wherein thou hadst most satisfaction, as thy communicating aright in such a place, thou hopest that is sure: thy reading the Scripture at such a time aright, thou hopest that is sure; thou prayed at such a time aright, and hopest that is sure; thou meditated in such a place aright, and hopest that is sure. But (believe me) death may make thee change thy thoughts; for there are some persons who have communicated, and prayed, &c. as right as any in this generation, who (for all that) will not find six duties wherein they can find satisfaction at death; Therefore our need is great to prepare for it. 6. Death will exceedingly try thy sincerity when it cometh; An hypocrite may go all along his whole way undiscovered, yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear what man he is. 7. Death will discover unto thee many hid and secret sins, of which thou never hadst a thought before, yea, albeit thou thought

thought these had been forgotten, death will let thee see them standing between thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death will accurately try thy Mortification, some will think they have come a great length in Mortification; but (believe me) death will try it, and put it to the Touch-stone. 9. Death will try thy hope, whether it be real or not. I shal only say this, that all the other graces must low the sail to Faith, and so it is Faith must carry us thorow, being that last triumphing grace, which must sit the field for us, when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is Faith that must enter us fairly within the borders of eternity; It is Faith must gainstand all the Temptations of death, yea, all the other graces must (as it were) stand by, and see Faith strike the last stroak in the War.

I I. The second consideration to press you to mind death, is this, that ye are to die but once, and the wrong doing of which can never be helped. If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended; if ye meditate not aright, ye may get that mended, and if ye communicate not aright, ye may get that mended; but alas, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that; Therefore, O prepare for death, that ye may die well, seeing ye are to die but once.

I I I. The third consideration to press you to mind death, is this, That they are pronounced blessed who die in the Lord, *Rev. 14. 12. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* O let that provock you to prepare for death, that so you may die in the Lord, that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confess it is a question difficult to determine, whether it be more difficult to die well, or to live well; I shal not answer it, but rather desire you to study both.

I V. The fourth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, viz. That though thou put all thy work by thy hand before death, yet shalt thou find that death shal have work enough for it self, yea, as much

much as thou shalt get done. It will then be much for thee to win to patience, it will be much for thee to win to the sight of thy Justification: and it will then be much more for thee to win to assurance. O then it is not needful for thee to put all thy work by hand before thy latter end come? Wherefore I may say to you as *Moses* said in his Song, *Deut. 32. 29. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* O that ye had this piece of divine wisdom! I pray you consider that sad word, *Lam. 8. 19. She remembreth not her last end, and what of it? therefore she came down wonderfully.* So will the down-coming of many in this generation be wonderful, who consider not their last end.

V. The fifth consideration for pressing you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That their labour shall end, but their work shall not be forgotten, as is clear from that forecited place, *Rev. 14. 13. They rest from their labour, and their work follow them:* and is not that a glorious advantage.

VI. The sixth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That death may come upon you ere ye be aware; ye know not but death may surprise you this night before ye go home to your houses, and therefore let that press you to study a constant preparation for death.

VII. The seventh consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That as death leaveth you, so will judgment find you; if death shall leave you strangers to Christ, ye shall appear before him strangers to him, therefore I intreat you all to prepare for it. I think that noble practice of *Paul* exceeding worthy of imitation, *1 Cor. 15. 13. I die daily* which I think doth comprehend these three things. 1. That *Paul* had death always in his sight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he endeavoured to keep such a frame, as every moment he should be ready to die, so that whensoever death should put the summons in his hand, he should be content

to answer. 3. It comprehendeth this, that he laboureth to lay aside and remove all things out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O saith *Paul*, I labour to clear my self of all hinderances, as that when ever I shal be summoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Therefore I would ask you this question, *viz.* When shal you make your last Testament? I think it were suitable for us to be renewing our Latter-will every day, for in so doing, *Paul* made an excellent Testament, the better of which none that died since have made, *2 Tim.* 4. 7, 8: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;* these are very sweet articles: and then he addeth, *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.* And think ye not that very sweet, that he would leave something unto you in Christs Name, *viz.* And that not for me only, but for all them that wait for his appearance. Now I come to the third thing proposed, *viz.* to give some directions for helping you to prepare for death.

Direct. 1. I intreat you be much in preparation for death every day, for it is even a preparation for heaven, to be taking a sight of your grave and latter end every day.

Direct. 2. I intreat you be much in those duties, First, in self-examination; that your counts may be clear with God, for many a ragged count shal ye have when death and we shal meet. Secondly, be much in the exercise of Repentance, that so ye may have every fault and corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. Thirdly, be much in the exercise of Faith, *making your calling and election sure?* Fourthly, Be much in the exercise of Mortification, and that will help you to keep a loose grip, not only of the world, but also of your idols; and if ye be much in these, ye shal undoubtedly be prepared for death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things
of

of heaven. A Christian that would be prepared for death, would have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think it would be an excellent help (in preparation for death) to take a sight of the crown every day.

Direct. 4. Labour always to keep a good conscience void of offence towards God and men: I say labour to keep thy conscience clear, and that shal be a continual feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not thy known duty, do not crucifie any conviction, neither break any resolution put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for death: I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known duty; see that ye adventure not to crucifie any conviction, and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now we come to the second thing which we observed from the words, *viz.* That this truth, that we shal once see death, is not much believed by any of us. And to make this appear, we shal only give some Evidences unto you, to prove that we are not as yet prepared for death.

I. *Evidence.* Doth not the unspeakable stupidity that hath overtaken many, say, that we are not a People prepared for death? Alas, many of us would find our selves in a most stupid temper, if we were presently to die; for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings and terrors of God, than if they did not belong unto us; and this faith, we are not as yet prepared for death.

II. *Evidence.* That we are not prepared for death, is our pursuing so much after vain and passing delights of a present world. Many of us rise up early, and go late to bed at night, and eateth the bread of sorrow all the day, and loadeth themselves with the thick clay; And I am sure that such a person (being night and day taken up with the world) is not prepared for death. I remember a word recorded of such a wretched one, who

who was exceedingly rich, said he, I would give to many thousands of money, if death would give me but one day: yet he got it not. And, O how suddenly will death surprise many of us, as it did him.

III. *Evidence*, Which speaketh forth our unpreparedness for death, is our impatience under every petty cross that we meet with; for the prepared Christian will be patient under very sharp crosses.

IV. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared, is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God. Oh, if we were prepared for death, durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God, and of our assurance of Heaven?

V. *Evidence*, Some of us can let our idols ly in our breast six years without repentance, and will never study to mortifie them, nor to repent for them; and surely such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously to mind what hath been said; and that ye may the more seriously think upon it, I will tell you some material challenges that your conscience at death will present unto you, therefore take heed, that ye may know how ye will answer.

1. *Challenge*, Is the slighting of much precious time, and sinning away the precious offers of grace. O what will ye answer to that challenge when death shal present it to you, Death will say (or rather thine own conscience at death) what ailed thee to sin so many hours without either praying, reading, or meditating? Now have ye any thing to answer when death shal present this challenge to you? I intreat you premeditat what ye will say: I intreat you, prevent death by presenting it first seriously to your selves.

2. *Challenge*, That death will present unto you, will be for the killing of many precious convictions which we have had. What will each of you answer at death, when your conscience proposeth this challenge unto you? Thou met with such a challenge at such a time, and went home and crucified it; when at another time, thou met

met with another challenge, and went home and crucified it; These challenges will be laid to thy door, therefore think on them.

3. *Challenge*, Death will challenge you for a formal hypocritical way of going about duties, I say, your conscience will then tell you that ye went to such a communion with a selfish end; and at another time, ye prayed hypocritically and formally. And what will ye have to answer when ye meet with these challenges? I confess I know not what ye can answer to these, but I charge you, be thinking what ye will answer, for it may be that these convictions shal lay on your consciences, that even this day ye have heard two searching Sermons and did meet with some convictions, but made no good use of them; yea, and it may be ye did sleep all the time. O what will ye answer, when it shal be said to you, ye went to such a Sermon, and slept all the time; and ye went to such a communion, but no other end before your eyes, but to be seen of men; I intreat you consider presently what ye will answer to these.

4. *Challenge*, Will be for your breaking of many precious resolutions. It will be said to some of you, that at the communion in this place ye took on vows, and did break them; I am sure ye cannot question the justice of this challenge; therefore see what ye will answer.

5. *Challenge*, Ye slighted many precious offers of the Gospel. O men and women in this City, what will ye answer to this? I was often exhorted to take Christ, and yet would never take him. What will conscience say to that, when death shal table it before you? I tell you what ye must then answer: O cursed I, that ever I refused Christ in the Gospel. And ye shal then be confounded, because this is your sin; Believe me, there was never an offer of this everlasting Gospel, and of Christ in it, made unto you, that shal not at death, (before or after) be brought to your remembrance. And, O how sad and doleful will it be to you, when Christ shal open the Book wherein all your sins are written,

written, and begin with the sin of slighting the great Salvation? Thus I invited you, when ye were twelve years old, but ye would not come. What will ye answer to this? Have ye any thing to say? Or must ye not stand speechless before your Judge, when he shall put home this challenge unto you? Therefore think seriously upon it, how ye will answer it.

6: *Challenge*, Will be for your sinning oftentimes against Light; and, O how painful and sad a challenge will that be at the day of death, when it will be said, thou sinnedst with a witness in thy bosom, that thou wast doing wrong; thy conscience will say oftentimes did I tell thee this is sinful, yet wouldest thou not abstain from it; and what will ye answer to this?

7: *Challenge*, Oftentimes ye sinned upon very small temptation, and what will ye answer to that? Must ye not then confess it, and say, O how often have I deserted Christ, and embraced my idols upon a small temptation? Now I intreat you be thinking what ye will answer to these seven most material Challenges, which certainly shall be presented to you at death. I assure you, ye must either answer all your Challenges in Christ, else ye will not get them well answered. Therefore I would exhort you to embrace the Gospel and Christ in it; and so let death propose never so many Challenges unto you, ye may answer them all as *David* did, viz: *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, (and that will answer all your challenges,) though my house be not so with God, yet I have the everlasting Covenant to build my salvation upon.*

Now to press you to make use of Christ, I shall give you these four Considerations.

Consideration 1: If ye embrace not Christ now, death will be very unpleasant unto you. O what else can comfort thee, when going through the region of the shadow of Death, but this, I am Christ, I am Christ? Is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Christ, and he is mine.*

Consideration

Consideration 2. If ye imbrace not Christ and the great Salvation now, it will be an hundred to one if ever ye get time or liberty to do it, when ye are going to die. For although many delay their closing with Christ till death, yet scarcely one of an hundred getteth favour to grip Christ at death, therefore think on it, for ye will not get your mind so composed at death as ye imagine, for all things done as ye suppose, therefore now imbrace the great Salvation.

Consideration 3. If ye delay your closing with Christ till death seise upon you, ye shal never be able to make up that loss. For will the dead rise and praise God? Or shal any come from the land of forgetfulness, to take hold upon a crucified Saviour? Therefore, O will ye take him for you Salvation.

Consideration 4. If ye will take Christ now, he shal be your guide, when ye are going through the valley and shadow of death. And O how blessed is the person that can sing that word, *Psal. 48. 14. This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can sing that pleasant song. O how may ye be comforted, when your eye-strings shal begin to break? O how happy is he who can say, *Though I walk through the shadow of death, yet will I fear no ill; for I know the Lord is with me.* Now this is the acceptable day, and the year of Salvation, therefore do not delay, but imbrace Christ, lest death surprise you ere ye be aware, and so that acceptable day be lost. But unto these who think they may delay till death, I say, surely there are many damned Atheists in hell that (sometime) did think as ye think; *I will make all wrongs right when death and I shal meet;* I hope that three days repentance will satisfie for all my wrong; for I am sure, there are many in hell, who did never get three days to think upon their former ways; Therefore, O come, come, and imbrace Christ presently. Now are ye all perswaded of this truth, that ye shal once see death? Then study a tender walking, for (believe me) here are many of us
who

who shall go thorow death with many bruised bones,
because of untender walking before God. We know
it is not the multitude of words can perswade you to
imbrace Christ, for many of you never minded the
thing: but (believe me) death will preach these
things to you in a more terrible manner than we can do
at this time. Therefore I say to each of you, O prepare
to meet thy God; for if death find you in an estran-
ged estate from God, I defy the Angels in Heaven to
free you out of that estate, and the day is coming,
wherein thou shalt cry out, *O saviour of the great Sal-
vation that I am, I would give ten thousand worlds for
one Sermon again that I once heard, wherein Christ was
freely offered to me,* When thou shalt be tormented with-
out hope of remedy; Therefore, *While it is to day
harden not your hearts,* for your late wishes shall not be
granted (when ye are gone) if we make not haste.
O therefore *Haste, haste, in time, and come out from the
land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage,*
and take Christ for your Redeemer; the guide of your
youth and old age. Now unto him who can lead you
thorow all these steps betwixt you and Heaven, be e-
ternal praise. Amen.